

CANADA'S

HISTORY MAGAZINE

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The Beaver

Navigating North:

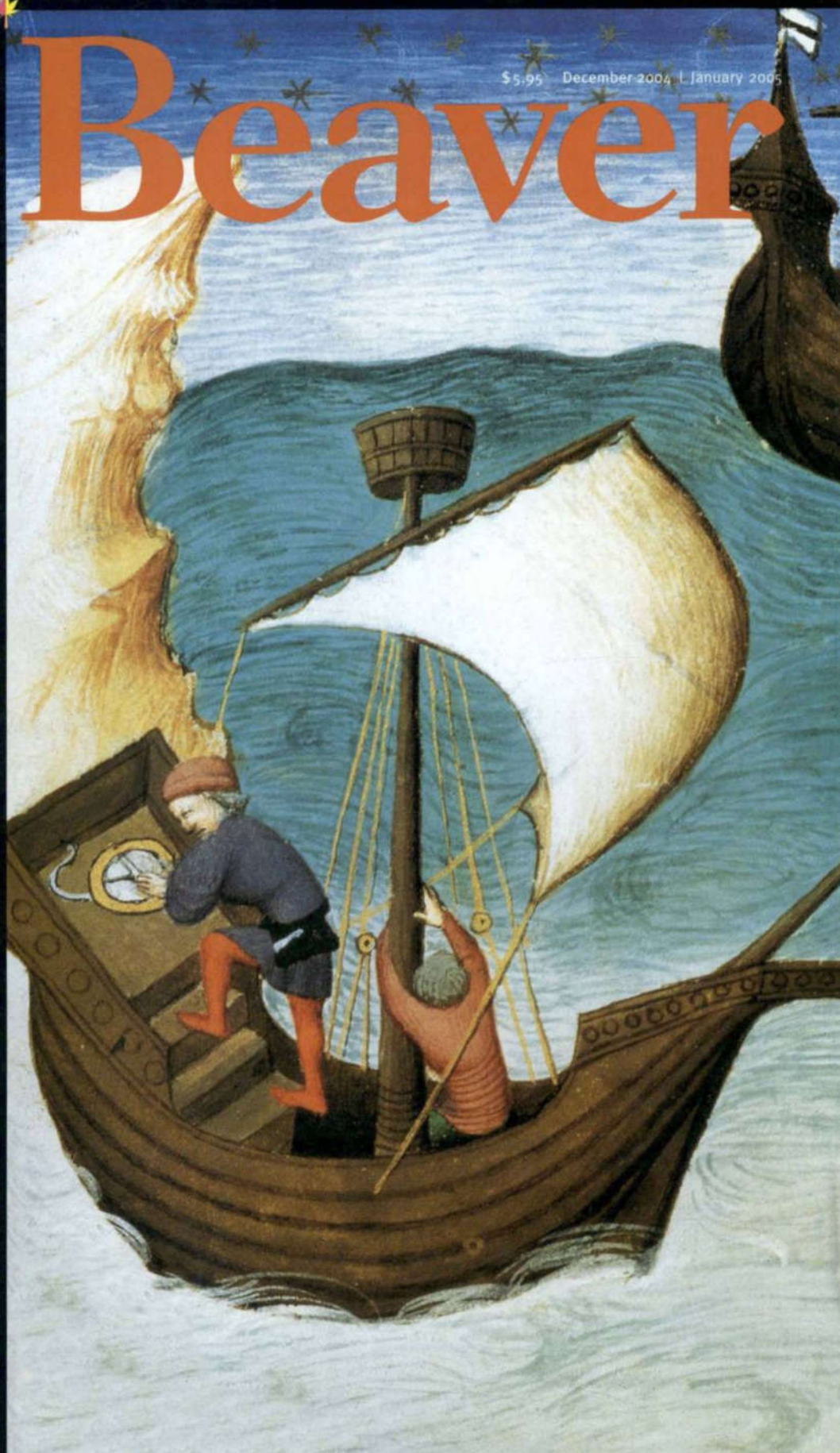
*The mystery
of Champlain's
astrolabe*

The People's Paper

Bombs in the Bush

Rag-and-Bone Men

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We'd like to make 2 points about you.



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Annalee Greenberg, Editor
Doug Whiteway, Associate Editor
Susan Falk, Assistant Editor
Pat Stanton, Design Director
Dorothy Bosma, Editorial Assistant
Tanja Hütter, Web Editor

Advertising Representatives:
Michael Wile
Phone: (416) 531-1483 Fax: (416) 531-1612
E-mail: michaelwile@historysociety.ca
Brian Stendel
Phone: (416) 630-4274 Fax: (416) 630-8557
E-mail: bstendel@brainstone.ca

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Phone: (204) 988-9300
Fax: (204) 988-9309
Toll Free 1-800-816-6777
E-mail: thebeaver@historysociety.ca
Member Services E-mail:
memberservices@historysociety.ca
World Wide Web site:
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Letters

Cringleworthy

I read the story "Strange Salute" [August/September 2004] and was beset by a medical condition hitherto unknown to me, "rigor mortification." That is, I stiffened up with embarrassment when I heard that our athletes gave the Nazi-fascist salute at the Berlin Olympics.

Okay, I loosened up after I realized that some athletes thought it was the Olympic salute. Most others seem too ignorant of what was going on to have it matter to them. Yes, and I know how well-mannered they were (as Canadians still are), and simply miscued with politeness. But why were the Brits and the Yanks savvy and we daffy about Germany's hell-spawned Reich?

It's no consolation to realize that the best that can be said of the deed was that it was due to ignorance. To history we look like ignorant frostbacks whose athletes did the Nazi salute at the Berlin Olympics because we were dumber than bags of snow.

DAVE WHEELER
NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

A question of allegiance

I read the articles in your August/September 2004 issue, "Evangeline" and "Acadian Sleuthing," with great interest and wish to add my congratulations to the Acadians for the recovery of their culture and history. Of particular interest to me is the use of myths to promote the culture, of which the poem "Evangeline" is an excellent example. Unfortunately myths only present one aspect of an event. There are some points that, in assessing the expulsion, should not be overlooked.

The mainland peninsula of Nova Scotia was ceded to Great Britain in 1713. The next forty years were good years for the Acadians, who were now British subjects. The colony prospered. They had religious freedom. The British preferred that they stay in Nova Scotia and discouraged them from moving to Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, or New Brunswick, as the French government hoped.

There was, however, the question of the oath of allegiance, and the British expected this of the Acadians. Since this meant they might have to fight their fellow Frenchmen, the Acadians refused. A compromise was

reached. They eventually agreed to a conditional oath, which exempted them from fighting the Micmacs or the French. This compromise held until 1755, including the first siege of Louisbourg in 1745. The British fought, and the Acadians stayed neutral.

In 1749 Halifax was founded, and English-speaking settlers arrived. As tensions grew, new forts were founded on the peninsula that joined the British colony to the French mainland – Fort Beauséjour on the French side, and a few miles away, Fort Lawrence on the British.

When Fort Beauséjour fell in 1755, there were several hundred Acadians found to be defending the fort. This was a serious breach of the neutrality oath, and as the Acadians were British subjects, the men who broke the oath were guilty of treason. It was apparent to the British that the trust that had made the compromise possible was no longer there.

With the Seven Years' War about to begin, the governor demanded an oath he could trust. The Acadians refused, and the expulsion began. Unusually for the times, after the war ended, the Acadians were allowed to return.

Compared to the fate of the Armenians after the First World War, or the Greeks of northern Cyprus, or the Serbs of Croatia in our times, this seems to me to be almost benign.

ALEXANDER PATON
VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Banking frailties

I looked forward to reading your article by John Turley-Ewart, "The Bank That Went Bust" [August/September 2004]. My sentiment rapidly turned to disappointment when I realized that his article was not a well-considered historical analysis of the demise of the Home Bank but a personal assault on the character of James Mason and his son, James Cooper Mason.

The author judges James Cooper Mason as "incompetent." This is a severe evaluation to make without substantiation. James Cooper Mason took over a situation in 1916 that in Mr. Turley-Ewart's opinion was already untenable.

The tone of the article implies dishon-

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esty and states incompetence. The stated fact that the Home Bank had grown to seventy-one branches must indicate that James Mason had some business acumen. Further, there is no indication that either of them had personally benefited significantly from the Home Bank or the association with Sir Henry Pellatt.

Overall, the unfortunate demise of the Home Bank should have been viewed more in the context of the frailties of the banking system of the early years of our Confederation rather than as the personal failure of individuals.

ROBIN BROOKS-HILL, M.D., F.R.C.P. (C)
TORONTO, ONTARIO

The fact of the matter

Capt. Patrick Toomey, whose letter in the Oct/Nov issue deals with my article on Bernier and the *Arctic* [August/September 2004], writes with authority on present-day ice conditions and navigation; I appreciated his letter, even while disagreeing with his interpretations. However, his letter contains a significant error of fact which – especially given his authority – misrepresents my article and, worse, the events of 1910–11 itself.

While Toomey has much to say about Arctic travel generally, the crux of his evaluation of those 1910–11 events is that since officers Janes and MacDonald were Arctic novices, their assessment that Captain Bernier should have at least tried to go further is entirely irrelevant. But as is mentioned in the article, a) of the two, only MacDonald thought they could have gone

further, and b) Bernier apparently did not think Janes's assessment irrelevant, because he had Janes write up a letter explaining the Captain's decision to turn back, which was then published in the official account of the voyage. (In his memoirs years later, Bernier quotes Janes's assessment again, and follows with, "I gave up all hope of crossing McClure Strait.")

These facts affect the interpretation. Given that Bernier was eventually investigated for running a fur trade with Janes's help, his reliance on Janes's support to defend his decision calls into question the decision itself – especially when MacDonald, in the crow's-nest alongside Janes, had a quite different assessment of the ice. This was as conclusive as I could state it: "Whether motivated by caution, duplicity, or error, the *Arctic* would not be making a Northwest Passage this year."

Finally, Toomey disputes my use of McClure Strait (rather than M'Clure). Having quoted the word once, to avoid confusion I used throughout the spelling preferred by Bernier and others associated with the Arctic in 1910.

ALAN MACEACHERN
DEPT. OF HISTORY,
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

More Letters The *Beaver* website offers a new section for letters to the editor. To see letters that may only be available online, go to <www.thebeaver.ca>, and click on "Extra! Extra!" to get to the "Letterbox" section.

EDUCATION

Taught to the tune of the hickory stick

"There was certainly more structure to the day," Marie-France Giasson, principal of Winnipeg's Ecole LaVérendrye, observes, leafing through an eighty-five-year-old teacher's guide that has children disciplined down to the nubs of their clean little fingernails. More structure to the day, more structure to the room: In a novel experiment in education, Ecole LaVérendrye, built in 1909 in the then-burgeoning Fort Rouge district, has reconstructed a turn-of-the-(last)-century classroom, furnishing it – like a period movie set – with all the trappings of a time when nurturing self-esteem was not a formal part of the curriculum. The desks (with inkwells) are bolted to the plank floor, the blackboards are slate, the lighting is antique, the walls are chalk white, and all things bow to the front of the room where the teacher's desk rises like a bench of judgment under a portrait of His Majesty King Edward VII. The only bits missing are a recitudinal schoolmarm and a passel of restless ten-, eleven-, and twelve-year olds. These will soon arrive, however. No mere exercise in extreme retro design, this period classroom has a pedagogical point: This winter, grades four to six girls will put on pinafores and tie ribbons in their hair, boys will wear knickers and suspenders, and they will spend the morning readin', writin', and doing 'rithmetic in the style of their great- or great-great-grandparents while absorbing the social history of their school and community in the early twentieth century.

The brainchild of Ecole LaVérendrye teacher Jerry Lemay, who leapt on the



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Currents

chance to acquire period school furniture from a defunct Manitoba museum, the classroom has attracted the attention of heritage societies and local businesses who have donated labour and artifacts to the project. Notable are the shelves full of schoolbooks of yore, some of which reveal period attitudes as well as period detail. (Careful vetting will screen them

from impressionable minds.) On the other hand, as Giasson points out, while teaching strategies may have changed over the many decades, subject matter is often unchanged. What advances have there been, for example, in $2 + 2 = 4$?

The strategy is eventually to make the heritage classroom available to other schools

that seek to give their students an old-new twist on learning. If so, they might consider arriving in the preferred pre-World War I mode – horse-and-buggy. The teacher's guide of the day advised not to penalize students if they arrived late in such a conveyance – a nod perhaps to the potential for disorder in an orderly time.

LIVING HISTORY

Randy Chappel, a historical artisan and interpreter at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village near Edmonton, is a history buff

with a thing for things. He is so fascinated with artifacts that he recreates them in a blacksmith shop. With a love of fur-trade history, Chappel makes trade kettles, fire strikers, awls, trade axes and knives, powder horns, cassettes, and canoe boxes, copying originals to make his new ones look authentic. "The canoe boxes were made with rounded or clipped corners to prevent puncturing the canoe if dropped, so of course mine have clipped corners too."

It all started when Chappel took an interest in reenacting the fur-trade brigades in Western Canada in the late 1700s and early 1800s. "As I got more serious about it, I started thinking about the type of gun I had, the clothes I wore, the tools I used, the campsite. Soon I had a period gun, period clothes, period camp gear." And as he visited various museums and historic sites and saw original artifacts on display, he considered how great it would be to have such things in his own collection. "I thought to myself, 'Well, I could just make them.'" So he did.

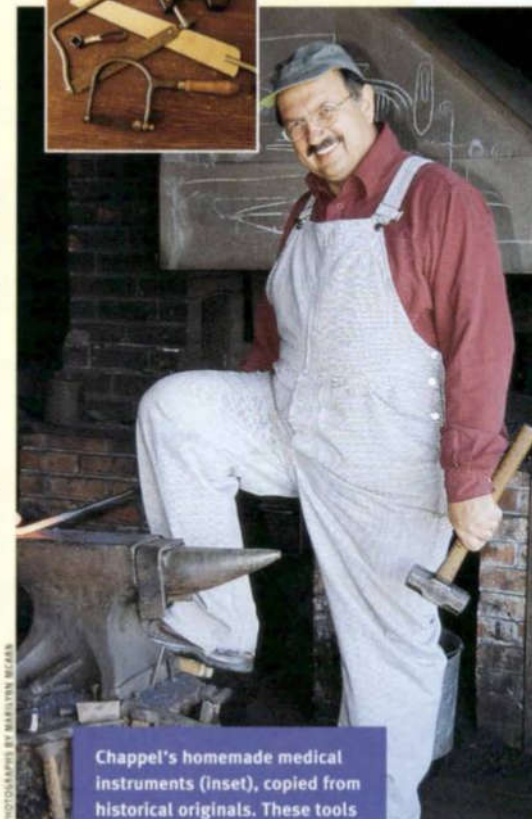
The first artifact Chappel reproduced was a Northwest trade gun. He borrowed a real one from a friend and ordered the necessary parts from various catalogues and magazines in the United States. From there he moved on to other fur-trade artifacts, and most recently to pieces from the medical history of that period. On a visit to Fort William, Ontario, in 1998, Chappel became enamoured with the region's past, which Lord Selkirk recorded in the early part of the nineteenth century. Lord Selkirk took an inventory of the fort, including the office of Dr. John McLoughlin, which present-day locals recreated based on his records. "The doctor's office was so neat to see, but I wanted to know more about the tools and procedures."

Chappel started to research the gory lore of Canada's remedial past and soon began to reproduce an assortment of medical apparatus. Part of his investigation involves studying museum collections of primary relics,

taking sketches and measurements for duplication. Back in the shop, Chappel makes rough steel shapes of the tools, then adds careful details by cutting, filing, sanding, and polishing. Sometimes he adds a fake patina to give an instrument a used look. Things like trepans (used for drilling holes in a patient's skull to treat a concussion) and bloodletting tools (used to cut the patient's skin to treat fever and other ailments) are now part of Chappel's creative repertoire.

Much of Chappel's work is on display at various historic sites in Western Canada, including the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. Chappel also gives lectures on medical history at locations across North America, showing off his lookalike artifacts to wide-eyed history enthusiasts.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Chappel's affinity for the past is obvious. As a child, he thought the history tales his schoolteacher father recounted were dull, but today says, "I think I was born two hundred years too late."



Chappel's homemade medical instruments (inset), copied from historical originals. These tools were used for amputations: the large one for the upper leg, the medium one for the lower leg and arm, and the small one for fingers and toes.

Beaverbrook vs. Beaverbrook vs. Beaverbrook

An ugly picture is emerging from the transcontinental battle of the Beaverbrooks that's been waged since early spring. The Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton, New Brunswick, has been fending off progressively more aggressive attempts from the Beaverbrook Canadian Foundation and Beaverbrook U.K. Foundation to gain control of the gallery's collection of some two hundred artworks. The dispute began over a J.M.W. Turner canvas titled *The Fountain of Indolence* and a Lucian Freud oil painting titled *Hotel Bedroom* — artworks worth an estimated \$30 million at auction. But when the gallery refused to acquiesce, Timothy Aitken, heir to Lord Beaverbrook and chair of the Canadian Foundation, went after the gallery's entire collection.

The lawsuits have piled up over the summer as the gallery and the foundation engaged in a war of attrition, which so far the founda-

tion appears to be winning. Included among the legal actions the foundation has filed is a suit arguing the U.K. Foundation holds title to the artworks; and a \$15-million suit alleging the gallery is misrepresenting ownership of seventy-eight paintings. In turn, the gallery has sued the foundations, hoping to secure clear legal title to the paintings and seeking damages. In retaliation, the Canadian Foundation suspended all of its charitable and philanthropic donations, cutting off not only the \$200,000 annually it gives to the gallery, but all money going to other beneficiaries, including a number of New Brunswick cities and universities.

The bitter fight stems from a lack of clarity as to who owns the gallery's art, a treasure trove worth as much as \$200 million and containing works by William Hogarth, Thomas Gainsborough, and Henry Moore, among others. William Maxwell Aitken — Lord Beaverbrook after he gained his peerage in 1916 and picked "Beaverbrook" from a map — established his foundations in 1954, with the mil-

lions he earned as an international industrialist, politician, and owner of British newspapers, including the *Daily Express*. Born in Newcastle, New Brunswick, Lord Beaverbrook retained a fondness for his home province and founded the gallery bearing his name in 1959.

At least one former gallery director maintains it was Beaverbrook's intent that the collection be a gift to the citizens of New Brunswick; but Vincent Prager, a Beaverbrook Canadian Foundation trustee and gallery board member, says while no formal agreement exists, the art is on loan. One thing is certain: none of the Beaverbrooks — heir, foundation, or gallery — intend to back down any time soon.

—Charles Mandel

ON RECORD

"Plumb tasteless!"

—Colonel Sanders, founder of American franchise Kentucky Fried Chicken, on Canadian cuisine, 1957.

ARTIFACT

Ascending Dalnavert's front staircase, one encounters a magnificent stained glass window, the largest of five at 61 Carlton Street in Winnipeg, the restored residence

of Sir Hugh John Macdonald, premier of Manitoba in 1900, now a National Historic Site. A fine example of Art Nouveau craftsmanship, it was one of the original windows placed in this opulent Queen Anne Revival-style home when it was built in 1895. Such windows often accompanied window seats in homes of Dalnavert's period. Filled with comfy cushions, they were glorious places to wile away afternoons.

This same window was stolen in 1973 from 61 Carlton Street during the restoration of the Macdonald home. However, follow-

ing an extensive publicity campaign, it was retrieved from a local churchyard where it had been left. It is now back in its original location.

Because such large unsupported windows are prone to collapse, it was fully restored in 1988. The artisan carefully replaced broken pieces of glass and all the leading, and mounted the window in a new frame. Today the window is more sound than it has been for decades.

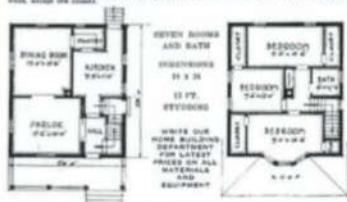
More information on Dalnavert is available through the Manitoba Historical Society website at <www.mhs.mb.ca>.



DALNAVERT

The T. Eaton plan books carried on through the 1920s, but were reduced in scope, with only a few house designs. In the later years, T. Eaton advertising suggested that the

— Les Henry, professor emeritus University of Saskatchewan, is the author of *Catalogue Houses: Eaton's and Others*, published by Henry Perspectives, 143 Tucker Crescent, Saskatoon, SK S7H 3H7.

[illegible]

TEATON CO.



The Kevin McGrath home near Fielding, Saskatchewan.

Poet Robert W. Service made his acting debut as a character he knew well—his own. Service played himself in the 1942 film *The Spoilers*, starring John Wayne, Randolph Scott, and Marlene Dietrich. In a saloon scene with Dietrich, Service sat in a corner, scribbling out his famed poem “The Shooting of Dan McGrew.”

At www.shipwreckcentral.com you can, if you like, add your own relevant shipwreck information to the database. We thought about adding our torpedo boat, which sank in our bathtub and caused much grief, oh, many years ago, then realized the designers of this appealing website meant for you to register a boat of note. For instance, entering "Canada"

And so you have one of the charms of shipwreckcentral.com: interactivity. Designed by Eco-Nova, the Halifax-based producers of such underwater TV documentary series as



a movie clip showing dives to the ship or dramatizations of the ship's demise. The *Empress of Ireland's* sinking in all of fourteen minutes in 1914 with over a thousand dead is particularly poignant. An ideal site for landlubbers and other armchair travellers on cold winter nights.

December 21, 1891: James Naismith is procrastinating.

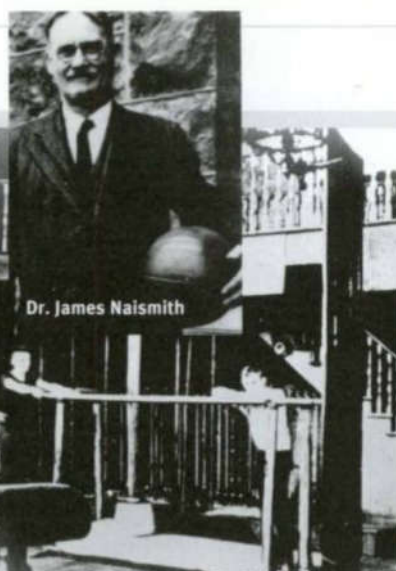
Two weeks earlier, Dr. Luther Gulick, head of the physical education department at the YMCA's School for Christian Workers in Springfield, summoned him to his office. Deep in the throes of a Massachusetts winter, Gulick had been desperate. His young male students were becoming bored with their indoor activities, exhibiting restless and rowdy behaviour. Football season had ended, and it was a long haul until baseball opened in the spring. The boys obviously needed a more strident physical outlet for their energy. He assigned Naismith, his new Canadian athletics instructor, a task: devise an activity to keep these boys busy. It needed to be a game of skill, and able to be undertaken indoors.

Finally, on this last day, Naismith hustles something together. He recalls a game he had played as a child called Duck on a Rock, which involved tossing a stone on top of a rock. Perhaps he could adapt this to the gym. Searching until he finds two peach baskets, he busies himself attaching them to two ten-foot poles, securing one pole at each end of the gymnasium. He then grabs a soccer ball and puts the puzzled boys to work, instructing them in the thirteen rules he has hastily scribbled a few hours previously. The resulting melee is so suc-

cessful that his superiors want to call it Naismith ball. But Naismith has a better idea. Why not call it quite simply what it was—basketball?

Naismith's love of sports blossomed at McGill University in Montreal. Born November 6, 1861 at Almonte, Ontario, then orphaned at nine and raised by an uncle, he decided to study for the ministry when he realized that his youthful drinking days were nothing but a waste of time. At McGill, he completed a degree in philosophy, but a fellow student introduced him to athletics. When he graduated in 1887, he served as physical education director at McGill while completing a religion degree at Presbyterian College. Naismith soon became a strong believer in the blend of spirituality and athleticism, always encouraging sportsmanship amongst his fellow athletes.

While delighted that his new game was well received, the young Canadian had no idea it would develop into a professional sport with a devout following, watched and played by avid enthusiasts in over two hundred countries. Naismith never did receive any monetary reward for his invention, turning down a lucrative tobacco



Dr. James Naismith

YMCA where the first basketball game was played.

endorsement that conflicted with his strongly

held spiritual values. But to the man of modest stature and nature, often described as sweet and gentle, who went on to earn additional degrees in physical education and medicine and serve in the military as a chaplain, it hardly seemed important. Though fame and fortune eluded him in life, today his name is synonymous with the sport that is played ubiquitously from alleyways to the Olympics.

The rules have changed slightly from the original thirteen Naismith dictated to his band of unruly men, but the basket still sits at ten feet, despite the staggering heights of many of today's players.

—Ann Chandler



Martin Frobisher

SCANDAL

Conning the Queen

In 1578, Martin Frobisher loaded twelve ships with 1,200 tons of black rock mined from tiny, barren Kodlunarn Island in the Arctic, and shipped it back to London. He wasn't needing ballast. The rock, Frobisher had convinced Queen Elizabeth I, one of his investors,

was rich with gold.

But it wasn't.

The question ever since has been: Boo-boo? Or con job?

The latter explanation received a boost lately from Laval University geologist Georges Beaudoin who has used electron probe and mass spectrometry analysis on the lead that Frobisher's metallurgists used to assay the ore. (To determine

a mineral's metal content, a sample is heated and mixed with lead. Any precious metals present in the ore bind with the lead.) The boo-boo theory presupposed that the lead used by the metallurgists was already inadvertently contaminated with gold, and that they innocently concluded the ore was valuable. But recent tests on beads of lead found

ten years ago at an archaeological site on Kodlunarn Island show beyond doubt that no gold was present in the lead used to evaluate Frobisher's ore. The Queen was deliberately conned. Interestingly, Frobisher kept his head (literally) and continued his seafaring career. He was knighted for heroism against the Spanish Armada in 1588.

The Mystery of the Missing Medal

He ended his working life cleaning the office of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, but that was fine with Filip Konowal. The World War I veteran got a job caretaking in the House of Commons in the Depression when jobs were scarce. As he told a

newspaper reporter in the 1950s, "I mopped up overseas with a rifle, and here I must mop up with a mop." In fact, he was selected to work in King's office by the PM himself who happened to notice that Konowal was wearing a war medal at work. It was a Victoria Cross, the British Empire's highest decoration, one of only ninety-four awarded to Canadians, and the only one won by a Ukrainian — at a time when many

of his Ukrainian compatriots were enduring forced internment in Canadian camps. When Konowal — who received his medal from King George V for exceptional valor during a battle near Lens, France, in August 1917 — died in 1959, his medals passed to the Canadian War Museum. By the early 1970s, however, they were missing.

Decades later, in spring 2004, an auction house in London,

Ontario, is offering a Victoria Cross for sale, and a sharp-eyed someone notes that the medal is Konowal's. Enter the Mounties and other concerned citizens. After a police investigation, the medal is returned to the Canadian War Museum, where it now rests safe and sound. And so, all's well that ends well.

Of course, where Filip Konowal's Victoria Cross was all those years remains a mystery.

OLDWAYS

How to Tell the Disposition of a Horse

Every one should remember that a horse can not understand all language or words of command, except so far as he is taught to associate them with actions, consequently a horse can not know what to do until he is taught.

If a man were to sit on a block and simply read the word "whoa" to a horse, he might do it indefinitely without teaching him its meaning; but if a horse were moved, set in moderate motion, and immediately after command the reins were pulled, he would soon be taught to stop.

[This] represents a very intelligent horse, kind and quiet to ride and drive; yet possessing a full degree of spirit. He is a horse that can be trained to be a favorite, and will also appreciate good care.

... There is just as much difference in intelligence of a horse as there is difference in men. Some horses can be taught most anything, while others are apparently without any faculty of intelligence.



A STUMPORN AND NULISH HORSE.

[This] is an animal that will tax the strength of his owner in order to keep him in proper subjection. He is full of life and excitable, and is liable to be very skittish, and will run away at any opportunity without considering the interest of the owner.



AN EXCITABLE HORSE.

[This] represents a horse that is difficult to manage. He is not vicious, but very nervous and excitable, and when properly trained he is liable to kick with his hind feet and strike with his forward feet, and will bite if an opportunity is offered. He is what may be called an untrustworthy horse, but the law of kindness will subdue him, but when in the harness proper vigilance must always be taken.



A NERVOUS HORSE.

Th[is] horse ...requires a gentle but strong hand in order to get the best possible results. He is high strung and nervous and will



A HIGH STRUNG HORSE.

never under any circumstances bear the use of the whip. He will go until he falls in his tracks.

To a certain extent some horses are vicious, but the fault is not so much in the horses, as in the fact that they have not been properly handled or carefully trained.

Many bad dispositions in horses have been brought on by the bad disposition of those who had them in charge. Some horses are dull, while others are intelligent; some are more easily frightened than others, consequently great care and judgment should always be exercised in training the horse. For good training largely makes the horse.



A VICIOUS HORSE.

[This] represents one of those indifferent specimens of horses, heavy, dull and stupid. He can be driven, but his gait makes it an annoyance rather than a pleasure, for it is almost an impossibility to get him to go faster than a walk. He is a horse that tries the patience of a saint, when behind time for a train.



A DULL AND STUPID HORSE.

The Farmers' Manual and Complete Accountant, edited and compiled by J.L. Nichols, revised and adapted to Canada by J.E. Hansford. Toronto: J.L. Nichols, 1895.

Our thanks to James Gorton of the Archives of Ontario for providing this document.

Ringling in the New Year was often followed by a morning knock at the door in many nineteenth-century Canadian cities.

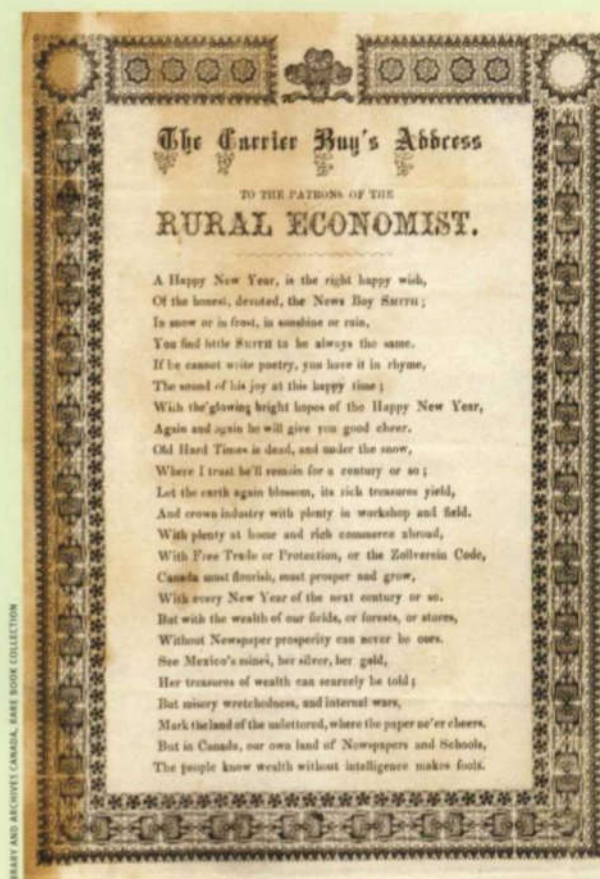
The caller? The friendly newspaper carrier. With well wishes for a prosperous year, carriers—or “printer’s devils” as they were called in the days when they doubled as printers’ apprentices—brought one-page addresses to newspaper subscribers in hopes of receiving a tip. Like the one shown here, the broadsides included some text, usually in verse, written by the newspaper editor. Most often the poems summarized and commented on the events of the previous year, and requested that the subscriber tip the poor newsboy.

But the textual portion was not the only impressive feature of the handout; the medium allowed compositors and pressmen to show off sharpened skills in typography and printing. Compositors surrounded the New Year’s verses with elaborate architectural borders constructed of hundreds of small printer’s ornaments. Pressmen employed a variety of ink

colours, including gold, silver, and copper, which required numerous impressions, and sometimes printed the addresses on silk—a slippery, delicate substance much more difficult to work with than paper.

The earliest recorded Canadian carrier’s address was issued January 1, 1767, by the *Quebec Gazette*, a newspaper then only two-and-a-half years old. Doubtless William Brown and Thomas Gilmore, founders of the paper, brought the tradition with them from Philadelphia, where they had learned the printing trade. The broadsides appear to be an American phenomenon, though scholars have noted that in Britain such poems were presented to customers by bellmen, lamplighters, and bakers’ lads as early as 1686.

Today, the National Library of Canada’s Rare Book Division holds dozens of these addresses from various papers in Quebec and Ontario, dating back as



Newspaper carriers delivered poems door-to-door every January 1 in the hopes of collecting a tip. This one was created in Markham, Ontario, in 1864 or 1865. The word “Buy’s” should read “Boy’s.”

early as 1811 and as late as 1915. The documents provide rare and valuable insight into the local opinions and social conditions of that period.

Our thanks to Elaine Hoag, Rare Book Bibliographer at Library and Archives Canada, who provided the document and information.

ON RECORD

Everybody in Canada seemed to listen to what they enjoyed, and nobody could tell them what to like, or what was popular, or what was the in thing. Even today, it is very hard to brainwash a Canadian.

—Duke Ellington, U.S. jazz performer, 1973.

Take the day off

December 12: To note the appointment in 1949 of Nancy Hodges as Speaker of the B.C. legislature, the first woman to hold this post in a Commonwealth legislature. Rise on a point of order.

December 18: To mark the passing 150 years ago of *An Act for the Abolition of Feudal Rights and Duties in Lower Canada*, which formally abolished the semifederal seigneurial system of dividing land in New France. Stop tugging your forelock.

January 7: To observe the fiftieth anniversary of the first television broadcast of the opening of Parliament. Praise cable.

January 19: To commemorate the victim of Canada’s first execution, in 1649—a sixteen-year-old Quebec girl found guilty of theft. Contemplate Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

Michael Riordon on

Evidence and Oral History

Ms. Lickers [staff counsel to the Indian Claims Commission]: "... do you remember people talking about Graham? Do you remember who he was?"

Mrs. Dieter [born 1914, Peepeekisis First Nation]: "Oh, yeah. He—he was the agent here [a federal civil servant appointed Indian Agent in 1896, William Graham closely controlled most aspects of life on the reserve] ... He was always calling meetings, so he called a meeting and invited all the—all the—what do you call it—elders, and he told them, he was always telling them, not asking them, and he told them that he was bringing a lot of nontreaty Indians into the reserve to start farming, and they—and he said is that all right. They said no, that's not all right because this is our land."

Ms. Lickers: "And how did—how did Graham react to that? How did Graham respond?"

Mrs. Dieter: "He didn't. He just went ahead and brought them in. He didn't listen to them. He never listened to the Indians."

(Indian Claims Commission Peepeekisis First Nation Community Session, September 11–12, 2002)

In 1898, federal Indian Agent William Graham began to import young Indian men from residential schools to farm on land guaranteed by treaty to the Peepeekisis First Nation, northeast of Regina in Saskatchewan. As Graham's colony expanded, original members of the First Nation were displaced from their homes and lost access to communal lands and water sources.

After a long series of failed petitions and inquiries, in 1986 the Peepeekisis Band submitted a land claim to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. For fifteen years they waited for a response. Finally, in 2001, the band asked the Indian Claims Commission to conduct an inquiry into its claim. Established in 1991, the commission's primary role is to examine specific land claims that

have been rejected by the federal government. In accepting the Peepeekisis request, the commission argued that "Canada's inordinate delay in responding to the claim constituted a rejection of the claim."

As part of their inquiry, ICC commissioners and staff travelled to Saskatchewan, and for two days they listened as Peepeekisis elders recounted their own history, in English and Cree. The 242-page transcript [see box] is a harrowing account of government arrogance and pervasive injustice.

The commission's evident respect for oral history as testimony is a recent development in Canada, and in some quarters it remains contentious.

In 1984, Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs launched an action in the British Columbia Supreme Court, claiming title to 58,000 square kilome-

tres of ancestral territory. Elders gave hundreds of hours of testimony on their peoples' centuries-old relationship with and inherent entitlement to the land. The presiding judge dismissed their oral history, and along with it, their claim.

Eventually the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that aboriginal title to land does exist in British Columbia, and that due weight must be accorded to the values and history of First Nations as conveyed through their oral traditions. This 1997 decision in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* is widely considered a watershed in validating oral history as evidence.

But what impact has it actually had? I asked two people who work in land claims: Has *Delgamuukw* turned out to be the landmark for oral testimony that First Nations hoped?

"Yes," says Rod McLeod, "and no." Based in northwestern Ontario, the Nishnawbe lawyer has worked for twenty years on First Nations land claims and self-government negotiations. "It was certainly an eye-opening experience for the Canadian legal system to get directly from the elders for the first time such an extensive, complex view of their peoples' connections to and interests in the land—how traditional territory is used and identified, for example, or how this knowledge is corroborated in long-standing traditions, songs, clan rights, and obligations—all these kinds of things that affirm your traditional occupation and use of the land."

And the "no" part? "It takes a long time for the system to change," McLeod replies, "especially in a case like this, where the court decision could have so much impact on the political and economic status quo. It fundamentally alters the relationship between the First Nations and Canada and the provinces, so the system will fight very hard to resist this kind of change. Ask any senior person in Canada's justice department whether there have been workshops and manuals produced on how to avoid the implications of *Delgamuukw*. If they're honest they'll tell you there have been."

McLeod's mixed assessment is sim-

ilar to Joan Holmes's. Based in Ottawa, Holmes does independent research for both sides of the table, First Nations and governments, federal or provincial. "I'd have to say that people have been paying a bit of lip service to *Delgamuukw*—'Okay, you can have an oral history component in your study, we'll agree to fund that'—but on the government side, people still don't really believe in oral history unless it's substantiated by the written record."

Until recently, the written record—nearly all of it on the government side—has been spared the critical scrutiny that opponents apply to oral sources. One aspect of Joan Holmes's work is to track the historical paper trail from original treaty negotiations to the present. "You'll find that the same people have been coming to the Indian Department [as it used to be called] generation after generation with the same grievance, but the department keeps saying, 'You have no grounds.' Then you look at department correspondence, and you find that the letter of response in 1950 is exactly based on the wording in the letter of 1930, which is exactly based on the wording of the letter written in 1890. Each time a response was needed, they just looked up the last letter and repeated it! Eventually, by sheer repetition, this becomes 'the truth,' and that's how the written tradition entrenches itself."

Why is the written believed and the oral not? "You have to conclude that really it's not so much the particular record that's distrusted, whether oral or otherwise, it's the source, the First Nations," says Holmes. But why? "Partly it stems from racism, but also from the assumption that since the Indians have an interest in this land, surely they'll stretch the truth, they'll say whatever they have to, whereas somehow the Crown is assumed to be above manipulating information, the records are true, untainted, and objective, because that side—our side—has no self-interest. That's the blindness of our society; we really want to believe we're the good guys."

In Rod McLeod's experience, "the good guys" still look down on the First

Nations. "On the government side there's virtually no respect for aboriginal values, perspectives, traditions, or approach—except that they appear to have a little manual that says, 'Make sure you show some respect for the elders and the chief and council.' When it's convenient they do, but in actual negotiations often they don't. If the government was negotiating with Japan, it would learn about and respect the viewpoint and culture of the Japanese as an ancient people and society, but that does not seem to be the case in most negotiations with our people. Unfortunately I think this attitude is broadly pervasive in Canadian society. They consider our cultures historic footnotes—simplistic and pretty much irrelevant."

McLeod regards the Indian Claims Commission as a necessary, though partial, step toward respect. Since 1991, the commission has received 125 requests for inquiries, and forty requests for mediation and facilitation since it began offering these services in 1998. Along the way, the ICC has significantly raised the profile of oral history.

In community hearings, ICC commissioners and lawyers ask elders to describe how their land came to be lost, and what affect this has had, from their own experience or as conveyed by previous generations. Then the lawyers submit legal arguments, and the commissioners weigh all the evidence—oral and written—to determine whether the claim is valid. Once a claim is accepted by the government and negotiations have begun, elders are asked to describe what kinds of activities took place on the land—agriculture, mining, forestry, traditional activities like hunting, trapping, and fishing—to help set a real value on the loss of access to these activities.

I asked Ralph Brant, director of mediation for the ICC, why the commission gives so much attention and weight to oral history. "I'd say we recognize that the documentation isn't always as demonstrative or revealing as it should be. Particularly back in the early days of Indian agents, there weren't always accurate records kept of what transpired. So we augment the

written documents with history as people remember it."

Given that some critics, particularly in government, still question the validity of oral history as evidence, how does the commission test the accuracy of its sources? "I don't know that there's any way to actually test it," Brant replies. "It's used in conjunction with documents and legal arguments, and these various sources have to be in sync, more or less. If the historical documents are completely different from what the elders are saying, that would certainly raise questions about one or the other. The commissioners hear what the people have to say, then they decide what weight should be given to the various forms of information before them."

I asked each of my informants what would make the claims process work better. "More resources," says Ralph Brant, "both human and financial." Joan Holmes: "More face-to-face contact. If you listen, slowly you start to understand what these claims are really about." Rod McLeod: "A fair system of claims adjudication completely independent of government. Right now Canada is adjudicating claims against itself—it controls the whole process, it is judge, jury, and executioner, which is totally unfair." The Indian Claims Commission continues to recommend a more independent claims process in each of its annual reports.

On May 28, 2004, the commission issued its findings on the Peepeekisis First Nation's land claim. It concluded, "Through the ambition of one Indian Agent, William Graham, and with the approval of the Department of Indian Affairs, the Crown embarked on a series of illegal practices which seriously infringed on the Peepeekisis Band's legal interest in its reserve and forever changed its identity as a band." The commission recommended that the claim be accepted for negotiation by the government of Canada.

And there it stands. ■

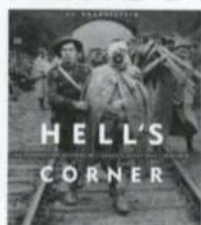
Michael Riordon's latest book, *An Unauthorized Biography of the World: Oral History on The Front Lines*, was published in October by Between the Lines, Toronto.

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Obachan's Garden

directed by Linda Ohama

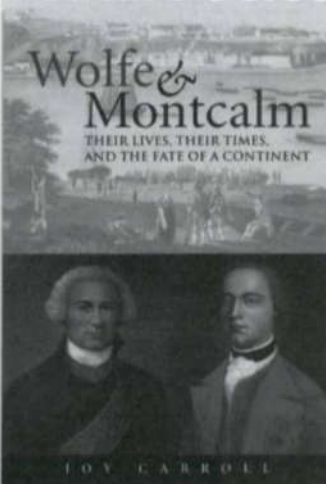
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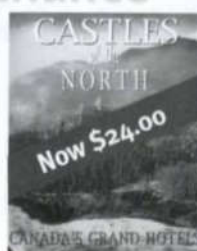
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Legend says Samuel de Champlain misplaced a valuable scientific instrument in 1613. Evidence says otherwise. by Douglas Hunter

The Mystery of Champlain's Astrolabe

The astrolabe (below, right) found in 1867 by Edward Lee near Cobden, Ontario, and since linked to Samuel de Champlain. The astrolabe is housed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in a domed display whose signage simply says "Astrolabe." One of the four illuminated descriptive panels has a map tracing a speculated route of Champlain's 1613 portage, and says no more than that "certain nineteenth century authors" attributed the device to Champlain.

Champlain in an Indian Canoe, by John Henry de Rinzy (1852–1936).

The four hundredth anniversaries of Samuel de Champlain's many New World adventures are upon us, and will roll over us like successive Fundy tides until 2035, when this nation's founding father officially has been dead and gone for four centuries. It's an opportune time to do some historic housecleaning on Champlain, as the last big anniversaries, the tercentenaries at the start of the twentieth century, did much to cement one of the most persistent misunderstandings about the great explorer: that in June



1613 he lost a navigation device called a mariner's astrolabe along the portage route around the Calumet rapids on the upper Ottawa River.

The astrolabe was discovered in 1867 near Cobden, Ontario. The idea that this essential navigation device once belonged to the most celebrated cartographer and explorer of early Canadian history has been irresistible to many. Despite academic misgivings about the Champlain provenance, in 1989 the federal Department of Communications agreed to pay the astrolabe's owner, the New York Historical Society, a whopping U.S. \$250,000 so that the astrolabe (which without the Champlain provenance would have commanded \$50,000 to \$100,000) could become a key part of the collection of the new Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec.

The Champlain provenance case for the "Cobden astrolabe" (as it is known to those squeamish about

the Champlain attribution) appears so weak as to be ephemeral, and is itself an intriguing historical artifact. Long overdue in receiving full consideration is the more likely case: that the instrument belonged to a missionary of the Society of Jesus – the Jesuits, the Black Robes of our turbulent seventeenth-century history.

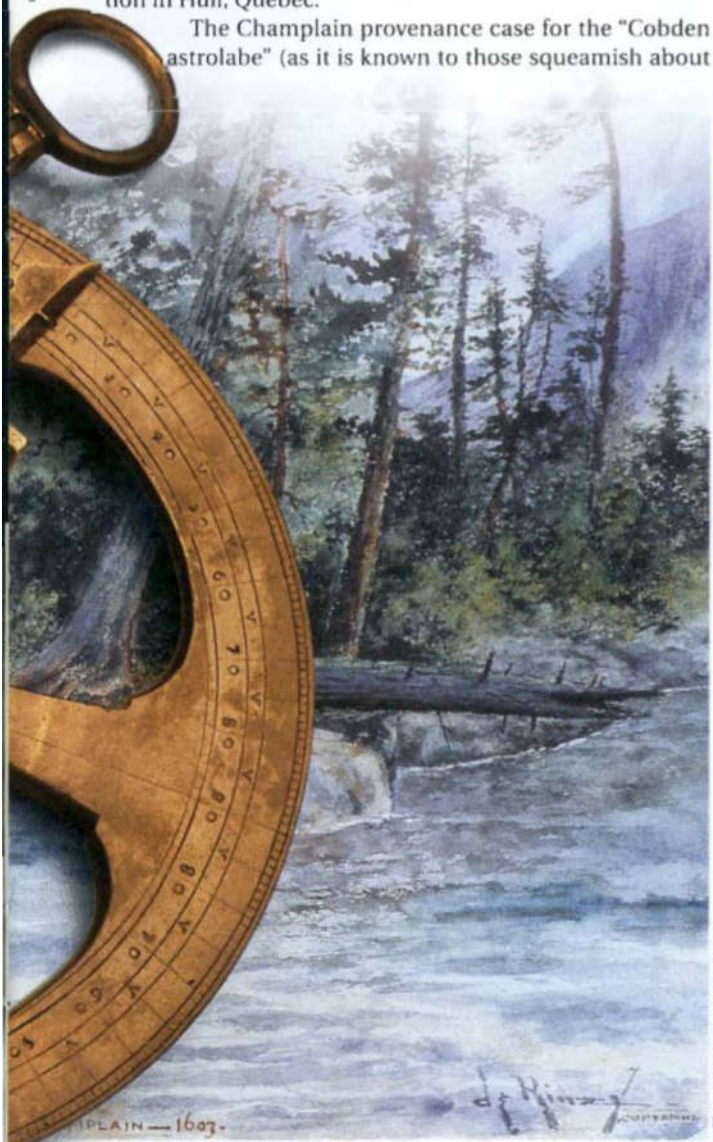
So what's the case for Champlain's ownership? Champlain made his first trip up the Ottawa River in June 1613. He was travelling with an eternally controversial figure named Nicholas de Vignau, who had wintered over among the Algonquin people on the Upper Ottawa. After returning to France, Vignau had convinced Champlain that he had visited the "Northern Sea," what we now call Hudson Bay and James Bay, only recently explored by Henry Hudson for England. Now Champlain was on his way up the Ottawa, hoping to visit this northern sea himself.

The astrolabe, which is a genuine early-seventeenth-century device (although there is debate about how much of it has been replaced or repaired over the years), turned up in the vicinity of the portage past the Calumet rapids, about two hundred metres down Buttermilk Creek from the shore of Green Lake, since renamed Astrolabe Lake, which is a glorified pond about five hundred metres long. It was found by fourteen-year-old Edward Lee while he was helping his father, a local farmer, clear a lot for its new owner, Charles Overman, the captain of a local steamboat.

Young Lee found the object (while dad was eating lunch) when the top section of a fallen pine tree he was pulling with a team of oxen scraped clear the concealing moss and muck of the creek's bank. No one present that day apparently gave any thought to Champlain, who was hardly a giant of history then. But his stock was on the rise. Francis Parkman had just given his career its first decent English-language overview in *Pioneers of France in the New World*, published in 1865. Still, there was no English translation available of Champlain's *Voyages*, and the first edition to be published in Quebec, in their original French, was three years away.

Charles Overman showed up at the work site and offered the boy ten dollars – about \$170 in today's money – for what people seemed to think was some kind of compass. Edward's dad handed it over. The boy never did see the money. The astrolabe was soon passed along to Overman's employer, the Ottawa freight forwarder Richard Cassels, who moved to Toronto sometime in the 1870s, taking the astrolabe with him.

Mariners' astrolabes are very rare. One of the most common scientific instruments of the seventeenth century, once they became obsolete around 1700, most were inevitably melted down. Only twenty-one were known in 1966. Now we have more than eighty, mainly because of the work of marine archaeologists on shipwrecks. To understand how the Cobden astrolabe ended up in Champlain's figurative possession around 1879, and why we should ask him to drop it



like a hot potato, you first have to understand what mariners' astrolabes were for, and how Champlain in particular would have used one.

Scientific navigation was in its infancy in Champlain's time. To fix one's position on the surface of the earth, you need two crosshairs: latitude, which runs east-west, and longitude, which runs north-south. Champlain could figure out latitude most readily by measuring the altitude of either the pole star or (which seemed to be his habit) the noonday sun; a "noon sight" required him to then consult a celestial almanac that gave an altitude correction (declination) for each day in order to arrive at the latitude. Figuring out an accurate longitude essentially was beyond the capacity of a trailblazing seventeenth-century explorer on the move. So Champlain's *Voyages* (which for the purposes of this article will refer to all of Champlain's published works) for the most part only offer latitude figures. (He probably recorded more in his notebook, which has disappeared). Four are from the 1613 wild goose chase up and down the Ottawa with the goose named Vignau.¹

Conrad Heidenreich, a retired professor of geography at York University and a leading expert on Champlain's cartography (who is currently editing a new translation of the *Voyages* for the Champlain Society), has called Champlain's latitude results "excellent." Professor Heidenreich has shown that the explorer's mean error margin for the sixty-two latitude sightings in the *Voyages* was around 15 minutes, or a quarter degree; many errors were down in the single-digit range of minutes, and his average error for almost forty readings before something went awry on the 1613 journey was less than 13 minutes. That would get you fired as a road surveyor today, but it was pretty good, even exceptionally so, for a guy often travelling by canoe, off the edge of the known world, four centuries ago. And Champlain needs to be cut further slack, because the declination corrections in celestial almanacs often were themselves in error.

¹Every degree of latitude represents almost 113 kilometres (70 statute miles) on the earth's surface, so for increased accuracy, a degree is divided further into 60 minutes, which were sometimes expressed by Champlain as simple fractions of a degree. (Every minute is further divided in to 60 seconds, but Champlain never measured these.)

But Champlain never identified the specific instrument he used. A mariner's astrolabe is typically a cast brass wheel with at least part of its circumference marked out in degrees and a sighting pointer (alidade) on a central pivot. Champlain most likely did have such an astrolabe on his inland journeys. And he mentioned an astrolabe in his will. But there is a big problem with the Cobden astrolabe. It's totally unsuited to the job of precision land-based navigation and cartography.

How to Use an Astrolabe

1. Choose a time close to 12:00 noon when the sun is at its highest in the sky.¹
2. Suspend the astrolabe to an immovable object so that its vertical axis will point to the centre of the earth and its horizontal axis will align with the horizon.
3. Align the alidade with the sun so that the sun shines directly through the alidade's two pinnules (peep holes).
4. Measure the angle of the sun's altitude from the horizon. In this example, the altitude measures 62°.

¹Since Champlain had no accurate portable timepiece, his first step would have been to determine noon, when the sun's shadow is shortest, by observing the shrinking shadow of a needle set on a board.

There's been much debate over whether or not the Cobden astrolabe could have produced the fine results that Champlain published, and this does seem fairly doubtful. But the overriding issue, which has not really been engaged, is why Champlain would have tried to produce his results with the Cobden discovery. Wondering if Champlain employed the Cobden astrolabe on the Upper Ottawa is like wondering if Mike Weir could drain a twenty-foot putt with a sand wedge during the Master's. It might be doable with an awful lot of practice and some luck, but why on earth would Weir not just use a putter?

The compact size of the Cobden device (14.7 centimetres, versus most surviving models, which fall between 16 and 18 centimetres) suggests Champlain could have chosen it for portability, but this would have come at great expense



A statue of Champlain commissioned in 1915 by the City of Ottawa, which stands today at Nepean Point, features the explorer with an astrolabe in hand, though upside down.

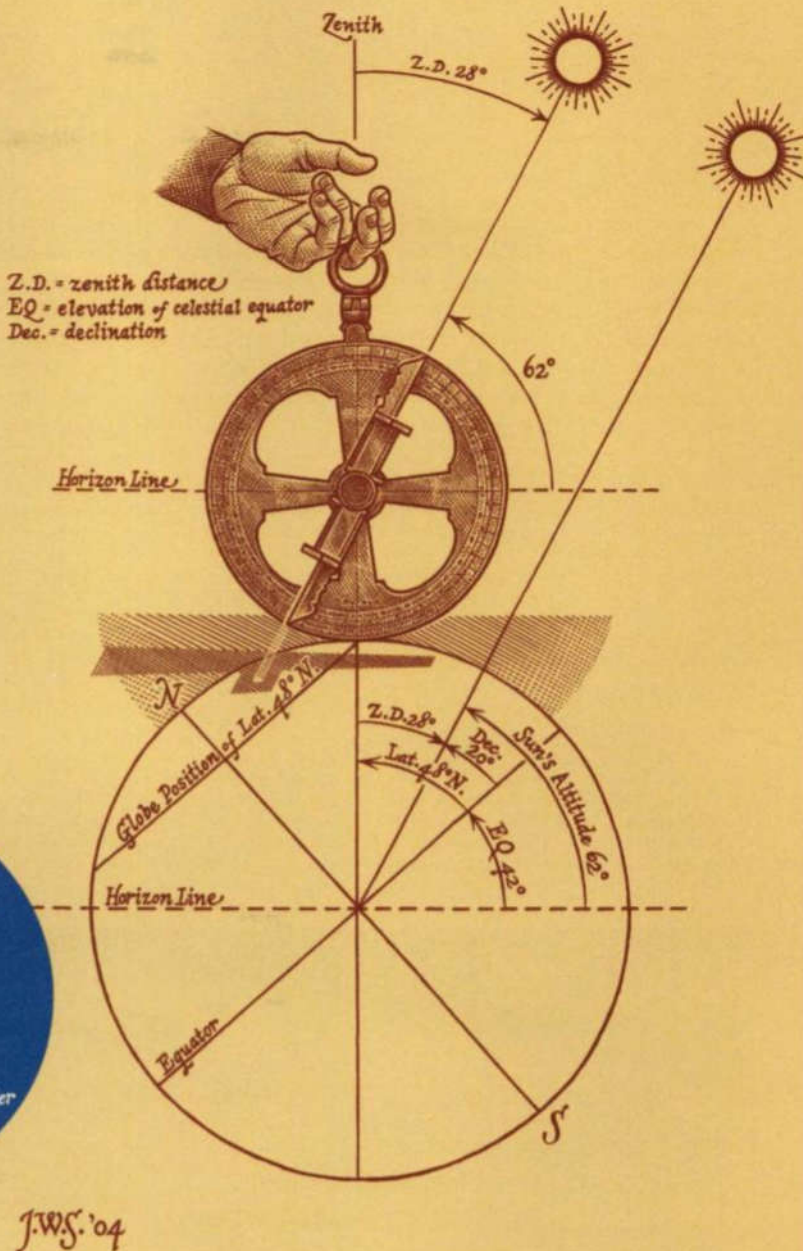
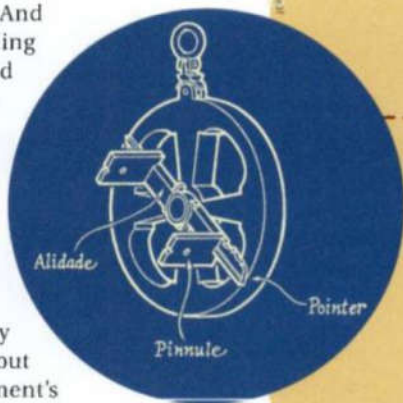
5. Subtract the altitude from 90° to find the zenith distance. In this example 90 minus 62 equals a zenith distance of 28 .
6. Open your declination tables to the current date and read off the figure given for 12:00 noon. In the year 1610, this example coincides with the date of May 10. The declination for that date is 20° .
7. Add the zenith distance to the declination to find your latitude. In this example, 28 plus 20 equals 48 . By this measurement, you are at 48° North Latitude.

²The declination reading for 1610 is taken from the tables given in *Certain Errors in Navigation* by Edward Wright (c. 1558–1615).

of practicality. And its size is telling as to its designed purpose. So is the positioning of its two pinnules,

the square-shaped sighting vanes on the alidade, which are only separated by about half the instrument's diameter. The mariner's astrolabe design rule of thumb was that it needed to be smaller and its pinnules positioned more closely together if it was to be managed on the deck of a heaving ship, particular in rough weather. What the instrument lost in accuracy it gained in basic functionality. A navigator in this situation only cared that he could reasonably determine his degree of latitude so that he could maintain a general east-west course on an ocean crossing.²

²The fact that the Cobden astrolabe also has degrees marked around its full diameter is revealing. Most mariners' astrolabes limited the degree markings to the upper half, or even one upper quadrant. The Cobden device had four inscribed quadrants. The standard instruction manual for the mariner's astrolabe in the late sixteenth century held that two quick consecutive sightings of the sun should be taken, with both ends of the alidade. The two results would then be averaged, to reduce any errors in the device's construction. But if, as with the Cobden model, you had a scale for both ends of the alidade when taking a sighting, you could verify the alignment of the alidade immediately and not have to try to get a confirming fix, which might be impossible to achieve while the ship rolled and heaved in rough weather.



If more precise results were required, such as for cartography, noticeable design changes occurred. The overall diameter increased, usually to thirty centimetres or more, and sometimes the pinnules were also moved closer to the ends of the alidade—in one surviving example, right to the ends. Sightings were more accurate, but much fussier. Such devices could be reliably used if the ship was in calm water, or if the user was on solid ground. Navigators often owned more than one kind of astrolabe to suit the job at hand.

The Cobden astrolabe was plainly something a navigator would reach for on an ocean crossing, on a rolling deck, to get a very basic latitude fix. It would not have been chosen by someone like Champlain, travelling in-country, who wanted to produce latitude fixes suitable for cartography. Whatever he was using gave him the confidence to measure

fractional degrees, and to do so with consistently small error margins.³ The Cobden example's small circumference is marked only in full degrees, with each degree about one millimetre apart. Professor Heidenreich has written that Champlain might have at best guessed at half degrees (thirty minutes) with it. He is skeptical of any assertion that one could determine smaller fractional degrees with it, out of doors, with the light of the noon sun.⁴

³Champlain's published latitude figures are, at the same time, real curiosities. All of his results are published in either fractional degrees or expressed in minutes that convert readily to basic fractions. In some cases, it appears he arrived at these fractions by averaging the results of different observations, perhaps from different instruments or collected on different days or even by different people—for example, averaging half a degree and one third of a degree, or one-quarter and one-third. A "pure" sighting from a given day should have, in at least a few occasions, produced results expressed in minutes that could not be reduced to a basic fraction, since declination corrections involved single minutes, and probability says that, sooner or later, he was going to have a final result like thirty-three minutes. I suspect Champlain processed his results in some way, perhaps in preparation for cartographic plotting, and that even finer results remained in his notebook. Heidenreich has noted that Champlain's mean errors in his cartography were smaller than those of his published latitudes.

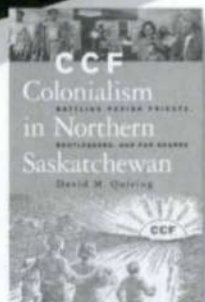
⁴Although mariners' astrolabes were developed by the late fifteenth century, becoming larger and more precise throughout the sixteenth, by about 1600, the English were producing ones with complex calculating abilities. One example from 1616 hints at the sort of sophisticated instrument Champlain would have preferred for his cartographic efforts. The St. Andrew's University mariner's astrolabe is about 39 centimetres in diameter (15.5 inches) and has a transversal scale inscribed below the main degree divisions, which would allow positions as fine as one-sixth of a degree (ten minutes) to be determined.

And even for bad-weather shipboard use, the Cobden astrolabe was an archaic design by 1613, being one of the last known examples of a wedge shape. This feature may have served to counterbalance the off-centre weight of the alidade and keep the device properly aligned vertically when suspended from its ring. By the late sixteenth century, error problems with the design already had led to more robust astrolabes with parallel sides.

I think the sheer inappropriateness of the Cobden astrolabe as the tool of a prominent, land-based, map-making explorer rules out Champlain's 1613 journey as its source. Professor Heidenreich has proposed that Champlain was using something thirty to sixty centimetres in diameter (one to two feet), as other explorers are known to have employed. And Dr. Randall Brooks, curator of Physical Science and Space at the Canada Science and Technology Museum, has indicated the Cobden astrolabe's inherent scale flaws would cause it to be in error by 50 min-

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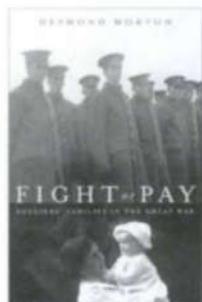
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Champlain was too good a navigator to make two horrendous latitude mistakes in a row.

utes in the latitudes in which Champlain used it. But we can't dismiss altogether a Champlain attribution for this astrolabe without confronting the long-standing puzzle of how the *Voyages*' latitude figures for the 1613 trip went from being extremely good to pretty awful in a matter of days. Because it's this puzzle that led to the Champlain attribution in the first place.

A flesh-and-blood Champlain may not have dropped the Cobden astrolabe, but a historic Champlain, a creature of modern imagination, deftly picked it up. Timing was everything. We were just getting to know Champlain when an astrolabe turned up that needed an owner.

The harmonic convergence of the astrolabe with the rising star of Champlain began, innocently enough, with the 1870 publication of Champlain's *Voyages* in Quebec (*Oeuvres de Champlain*). In the annotations by Abbé Charles-Honoré Laverdière of Laval University, a problem with one of Champlain's reported latitude positions was noted. Champlain's latitude figure for the south end of Lac St-Louis at the beginning of the trip was tack sharp, off by just two minutes, and he was only in error by 12 minutes at present-day Ottawa's Chaudière Falls. And so Abbé Laverdière couldn't help but notice that Champlain's latitude for Morrison Island above the Calumet Rapids portage, where Champlain's northerly progress ended at an Algonquin village, was more than a full degree in error to the north—reported at 47 degrees, it was actually 45 degrees, 48 minutes. It was a clanging mistake, totally out of character for Champlain. Laverdière could only suggest a poor instrument as having been the cause.

Champlain became a more familiar historical figure as the 1870s drew to a close. Laverdière's biography, originally contained within the *Oeuvres de Champlain* of 1870, was published separately (and posthumously) in 1877. And the Prince Society of Boston issued the initial volume in the first English translation of Champlain's *Voyages* in 1878 (although the 1613 journey wouldn't appear in translation until the final volume, in 1882). The zeitgeist knitted together Laverdière's perplexity over the rotten latitude position for Morrison Island with the astrolabe that had passed into Richard Cassels' possession.

The medium of convergence was Alexander Jamieson Russell, author of *The Red River Country*, which was published by Montreal's G.E. Desbarats in 1870, the same year that Desbarats brought out the *Oeuvres*. Russell's pamphlet *On Champlain's Astrolabe* of 1879, also published by Desbarats, argued that Champlain's latitude for Morrison Island was so bad because he had to estimate it, and he had to estimate it because he had lost his astrolabe at Green Lake.

Champlain, however, in addition to not saying anything

in his *Voyages* about losing an astrolabe, doesn't provide irrefutable narrative evidence for having been near the discovery site. Champlain's portage route still hasn't been fully analyzed—by giving the *Voyages* a close reading and actually inspecting the portage terrain—and has been plagued by erroneous assumptions (see map on following page).

The latitude problem also turned out to be more complicated than Laverdière at first thought. Champlain's latitude for the spot where he began the portage (which is generally thought to have been at the nineteenth-century steamboat wharf, Gould's Landing, near the present-day hydroelectric dams at Portage du Fort) was also in error by more than a full degree to the north. Explaining both uncharacteristic errors, by having Champlain lose an astrolabe between the two mistakes, took some intellectual gymnastics. There are more permutations to the pro-Champlain case for the astrolabe than I can address in this space, but I'll boil it down to the critical ones.

Scientific analysis has indicated that the astrolabe is at least contemporary with Champlain, and a stamped date of 1603 coincides with Champlain's joining the explorations in North America for France. But nothing is really proved by those bare facts with respect to the find near Cobden (and Professor Marcel Trudel, an authority on Champlain who produced a thin biography in 1956, saw no evidence to link the device to the explorer). Nevertheless, Russell's basic Champlain provenance case, amplified in an influential address to the Canadian Institute in Toronto in 1879 by Toronto historian Henry Scadding, went like this:

Champlain was too good a navigator to make two horrendous latitude mistakes in a row. The odds against him getting the second sighting, at Morrison Island, as wrong as the first one, at Gould's Landing, were, so to speak, astronomically high. So the first error, at Gould's Landing, was the real error. Then Champlain went and lost the astrolabe near Green Lake—dropped it somehow, probably while climbing over and under a tangle of fallen pines that he mentions in the *Voyages* narrative. Too proud to admit in the *Voyages* that he lost something so essential (because not having the astrolabe might cast aspersions on his ensuing cartography), he simply used dead reckoning—the process of determining your position by estimating distance covered in association with direction—to guesstimate the latitude for Morrison Island. Thus, his great navigating skills caused him to repeat the large error margin from Gould's Landing in the guesstimate for Morrison Island.

Scadding's opinion, which was published in a pamphlet in 1880, was particularly influential, as he had written extensively on various historical subjects and had just finished a ten-year stint as editor of the *Canadian Journal of Science*,





Literature, and History. The American historian O.H. Marshall repeated the provenance argument in 1880, and John Charles Dent discussed it in the Champlain biography he included in *The Canadian Portrait Gallery* published the same year. When the Prince Society produced the third volume of its *Voyages* translation in 1882, a lengthy footnote discussed the astrolabe issue and directed readers to Russell, Scadding, and Marshall. The Champlain provenance for the Cobden astrolabe was now enshrined in the only English translation of the *Voyages*.

Richard Cassels died in 1895 and willed the astrolabe to his son William, who promptly began trying to unload it for \$1,000. In 1901, the purported connection with Champlain convinced Samuel Verplanck Hoffman, a wealthy New Jersey antiquarian who was assembling one of the world's leading astrolabe collections, to respond to a knockdown sale by Cassels, and he paid \$500 for it.

Hoffman was about to become president of the New York Historical Society in 1903, and once Edward Lee's strange find was in his esteemed collection, it became known as the Champlain Astrolabe.⁵ When the tercentenary celebrations of Champlain's exploits kicked into high gear on both sides of the border, Hoffman was involved in them, and the astrolabe's Champlain provenance was solidified. When the city of Ottawa unveiled in 1915 the statue of Champlain that stands today at Nepean Point, the sculptor had made sure to place the astrolabe in Champlain's hand—albeit, upside down.

Hoffman died in 1942, leaving the astrolabe to the NYHS.

⁵In the register of known mariners' astrolabes at England's National Maritime Museum, which scholars use, the Cobden find, NMM8, is called the "Champlain (Hoffman) Astrolabe."

After several exhibition loans to various Canadian institutions, the astrolabe was purchased for the Museum of Civilization, despite scholarly concerns that the Champlain provenance was, at best, iffy. And the museum, to its credit, has not clung to the attribution.

What's now most intriguing about the Cobden astrolabe is how poorly received an attribution far more credible than Champlain has been. This object has been crying out for a Jesuit provenance since the very day of its discovery.

Popular literature likes to relate how Champlain probably or definitely dropped the astrolabe while struggling through the downed pine trees he describes on the 1613 journey's portage. I've visited the portage route and the discovery site, which is now wedged between a trailer park and a golf-course fairway, and such a tangle of fallen pines could have existed in Champlain's time along the section of Buttermilk Creek where the device was found. (Removing a fallen pine, after all, led to its discovery.) And it's possible to imagine this smallish cast-brass object, which weighs only 629 grams, slipping out of a pocket or pack and falling silently to the creek bank, without anyone in Champlain's small party noticing. What's harder to imagine is how Champlain might have dropped unnoticed the rest of the stuff found with the astrolabe, and what he even would have been doing with it in the first place.

This other stuff has been dropped by the wayside as surely as Champlain allegedly dropped the celebrated object. These items were first noted by Henry Scadding in his 1879 lecture, but he made no attempt to explain them. Scadding had personally examined and photographed the

1 The nineteenth-century steamboat wharf, Gould's Landing, is where Champlain is presumed to have begun the portage past the Calumet Rapids in June 1613. His stated latitude of 46° 40' was in error by more than a full degree to the north.

2 The Champlain Society's translation of Champlain's *Voyages* included a map by J.L. Morris proposing the explorer's portage route. But the first leg, to Coldingham Lake, would have required an almost impossible ascent more than 400 feet above the river, followed by a steep descent to the little lake. While the influential map posited that Champlain then paddled through virtually every lake and pond along the portage to Muskrat Lake, including Green Lake, a close reading of Champlain indicates he was actually travelling on foot, his Algonquin guides evidently having left the canoes behind at Gould's Landing. Twice on this portage, they were supplied with canoes by natives.

3 Champlain described "passing four small ponds" on the first day of the portage. This gathering of tiny lakes (left off the Morris map) fits the bill much better than the grouping of Coldingham, Catharine, and Garden Lakes, as Morris interpreted. The grade is much more gentle from the Ottawa River, and is followed today by highway 653. (Which side of any of the portage's water bodies Champlain passed along is a matter of speculation.)

4 At the end of the first day, Champlain camped on the bank of a "quite pleasant" pond that he said "may have been a league in length." The combined lengths of Jeffreys and Olmstead Lakes, which could have appeared contiguous to someone travelling on foot (and are shown as a single lake on an 1880 county map), satisfy this description. The fact that he travelled the length of this pond the next day indicates he camped at the eastern end.

5 After camping overnight, Champlain struck out again. He said he "passed along this pond" and that his party "made our way by land for three leagues through more difficult country than we had yet seen, on account of the wind having blown down pine-trees one on top of the other..." His description of having to climb over and under the fallen trees suggests a banked river course. The course of the Muskrat River (whose drainage of Olmstead Lake was omitted on the Morris map) serves the narrative well.

6 While Champlain could have instead proceeded past Green Lake and down Buttermilk Creek, where the astrolabe was discovered in 1867, three factors militate against the route. First, Champlain made no mention of any other lakes or ponds on his three-league hike to Muskrat Lake after camping at Olmstead/Jeffreys, and he would have seen at least two. Second, Olmstead and Green Lakes are not connected, and have their own drainage systems. Getting from one to the other would have required hiking through hilly terrain, and then through marshy country, whereas the Muskrat Creek river course is a consistent grade. (None of the rivers or creeks was probably ever deep enough to float a canoe.) Third, the fact that the astrolabe went undiscovered for more than two centuries after its alleged loss by Champlain suggests that Green Lake and Buttermilk Creek were never on the main portage route. It's more likely that the lake was off the beaten track, and that the astrolabe (and other discovered objects) had been deliberately cached there some time in the seventeenth century.

7 This leg of the Calumet portage ended for Champlain at the village of the Algonquin chief, Nibachis, at the present site of Cobden. Nibachis supplied Champlain's party with canoes to carry them the length of Muskrat Lake. They would continue their journey north to Allumette Lake and Morrison Island, the site of Champlain's second latitude error.

astrolabe and interviewed its owner. Richard Cassels revealed that, after receiving the astrolabe, he learned that other items had been found, "along with, or in close proximity" to it. There were two small silver cups featuring some kind of "device, perhaps a crest," and several copper vessels that sound like small pans or trays, nested inside one another. Cassels tracked down the Lee family, only to discover that the copper vessels, which were in poor shape, had been committed to the farm's collection of miscellaneous metal scrap: a piece was even used to patch a hole in a canoe. And tragically, the silver cups had been sold to a peddler, who had them melted down for their metal value.

The presence of the small silver cups was repeated by Dent in 1880, but they and the other items were then essentially forgotten. Edward Lee was interviewed in October 1918 by Charles MacNamara for an article published the following year in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* magazine. Lee, then sixty-five, took MacNamara back to the site and described the discovery convincingly. But he declined to mention (or MacNamara declined to report) anything about the silver cups and copper vessels. Lee did surrender new information: that a rusty pile of chain had been beside the astrolabe, which he had disregarded, and which probably held a weight that hung from the bottom of the astrolabe. The astrolabe once had a ring on the bottom to which such a weighted chain would have attached, but it was broken off and lost when a clumsy Canadian museum official dropped the device in the late nineteenth century.

Now we had Champlain dropping a length of chain and possibly a weight as well the astrolabe, which we'll return to. And as for the cups, who in the Canadian wilderness in the

seventeenth century had more use for what sound very much like communion cups than a Jesuit priest? The "crest" or "device" could well have been the insignia of the Society of Jesus. Most impressive about Scadding's failure to tweak to the possible significance of the cups is that he was a doctor of divinity, an ordained Anglican priest, and had served as rector of Toronto's Church of the Holy Trinity from 1847 to 1875!

It's hard to imagine what Champlain would have been doing with these cups, never mind an obsolete astrolabe that was of rudimentary use on a lumpy ocean crossing. The cups make no sense as gifts for natives, and Champlain's party was travelling so light on the portage in a sprint for Morrison Island that they didn't even bother bringing food. Besides, once you accept that there was actually a set of lost items, you have a package of some kind, a case or a trunk, which would have long rotted away by 1867. That doesn't fall unnoticed out of your pocket while climbing through fallen pine trees. And the fact that these objects managed to go unnoticed for more than two centuries suggests that Green Lake and Buttermilk Creek were never on the main path of this portage.

A skeptical N.T. Gridgeman at last resurrected the long-forgotten silver cups in a 1977 *Canadian Geographic* article, and he made the logical link with Jesuits. These items, he wrote, "could not have been there by happenstance and, in fact, they support those authorities who say that the astrolabe in question is most likely to have been lost (or cached) by missionaries en route to or from Huronia in later years." We can well imagine them having been cached there, perhaps at the shore of the lake, and then forgotten, only to be nudged into the creek by spring runoff and melting ice pans drifting off the lake where the creek drains through the



beach. But the Jesuit attribution keeps butting its head against persistent blind spots of provenance.⁶

Alan Stimson's authoritative survey *The Mariner's Astrolabe*, published in 1988, acknowledged a possible Jesuit provenance for the Cobden astrolabe, based on Gridgeman's assertion. But then, Dr. Randall Brooks, in his paper published on the astrolabe's provenance in *Cartographica* in 1999, presented arguments against a Jesuit attribution, stating, "the missionaries were not there to chart the land, and, moreover, the Jesuit *Relations*, which provide details of their activities in New France beginning about 1610, make no mention of an astrolabe either being in use or having been lost by members of the order."

However, while missionaries "were not there to chart the land," Jesuits nevertheless did so. As Heidenreich has noted, in the period 1634–73, all the maps produced of the Great Lakes "were either based on information compiled by members of the Society of Jesus, or were drafted by members of the order."⁷ The best of them (which are worlds beyond Champlain's efforts in the Great Lakes), show latitude and longitude.

Then there's the problem of the *Relations* not having mentioned an astrolabe "being in use or having been lost" by the Jesuits. The *Relations* were not a daily diary of events or a line-item audit of possessions. They were annual letters to the faithful and the order's supporters. And one can't have things both ways: arguing that Champlain lost an astrolabe that he never said he lost, and saying the Jesuits couldn't have lost it because they never said they did. (Dr. Brooks, however, cautioned in his 1999 paper that "it is not at all clear that the association with Champlain is fully justified," and he also told me that the presence of those silver cups bothered him.)

The *Relations* are also not the final word on the order's activities. This was an educated order with considerable sophistication in astronomy and mathematics. Much information about their astronomical observations in Canada bypassed the *Relations* entirely and ended up in such publications as G.B. Riccioli's *Almagestum Novum* of 1651 and *Astronomiae Reformatae* of 1665. And while the *Relations* never say anything explicit about the Canadian mission owning—or losing—a particular astrolabe, they do contain strong internal evidence of an astrolabe's use.

We know the Jesuits paid attention to latitude—in addition to the maps they produced, they occasionally mentioned latitude figures in the *Relations*. And as well as wanting to know latitude for its own sake, they needed it to calculate (through spherical trigonometry and celestial observation) the local time, so that they could observe lunar eclipses in their efforts to determine the longitude of Ste. Marie in Huronia. Any doubt that the Jesuits were making some of their own latitude determinations is swept away by the following statement in the Relation of 1642 (Volume 21) for the Huronia mission by Jerome Lalemant: "*According to the latest and most exact observation which we have been able to make, our new house at Sainte Marie (which is in the midst of the Huron country) is in forty-four degrees and about twenty-five minutes of latitude*" [italics added].

This statement about making a latitude observation is as strong as anything by Champlain himself. The position of 44 degrees 25 minutes for Ste-Marie was off by a reasonable 19 minutes.⁸

But I don't think even the Jesuits would have relied on the old-fashioned, undersized Cobden astrolabe for astronomical observation. The device did have two unusual features that would have given it another use by them: as a surveying instrument. Its full diameter is divided into four quadrants (90 degree scales), where most mariners' astrolabes only have a scale on the upper half, and some only in one upper quadrant. It is also unique in having the (lost) ring at the bottom.

The full scale meant it could have been employed horizontally in surveying, a feature that would have extended its useful life. While the ring is thought to have supported a weighted chain to steady it in a breeze, I believe this was actually in part a plumb line, which would allow precise positioning of the device as vertical angles were measured in order to calculate the height and/or distance of an observed point. Such a tool would come in handy in laying out a mission site, and particularly in assessing topography. The full-diameter scale could be used to measure angles below horizontal—in other words, downhill. At Ste. Marie, the Jesuits had to plan drainage culverts, and they also produced a clever aqueduct that brought water to the mission from a nearby spring.

The fact that this astrolabe was instead attributed exclusively to Champlain, and continues to struggle to gain a provisional Jesuit attribution despite long-standing weaknesses in the Champlain provenance, testifies to the natural warps in cultural perspective. Imagine if the Jesuit martyr Jean de Brebeuf had been the leading historical figure from the seventeenth century when the astrolabe was discovered (which he

⁶Samuel Eliot Morison suggested a connection to both the Jesuits and Champlain in his 1972 Champlain biography. Noting that Champlain had willed an astrolabe to the head of the Jesuit mission in Canada, Charles Lalemant, Morison proposed that the Cobden astrolabe was in fact Champlain's, but that Lalemant was the one who lost it on the Upper Ottawa portage! While Charles Lalemant never actually made a trip up the Ottawa, his relatives in the Jesuit order—his brother Jerome and his nephew, the martyr Gabriel—did serve in the Huronia mission, and they, or some other member of the order, could have done the losing. But Morison never addressed the problem of how an astrolabe so small could have produced Champlain's published latitude figures—a shame, since Morison's great strength as a biographer of maritime explorers was his own nautical experience.

⁷"Seventeenth-Century Maps of the Great Lakes: An Overview and Procedures for Analysis," *Archivaria*, No. 6 (summer 1978).

⁸It seems more than coincidental that Lalemant timed a lunar eclipse at Ste-Marie on April 14, 1642, the same year for which he offered the latitude figure in the *Relations*. Four years later, Francesco Giuseppe Bressani (an Italian professor of mathematics who is also credited with creating a well-executed map of New France in 1657), observed a lunar eclipse at Ste-Marie with a telescope, and achieved errors in the local time of the eclipse's phases of less than one minute—an astonishingly accurate result.



wasn't, partly because he wasn't canonized until 1930). Someone would have tried to press those communion cups – which also would never have been melted down – into his hands. The astrolabe would not have been the main prize but an associated curiosity, easily explained by what was known even then of Jesuit expertise in astronomy and cartography. Instead, the Jesuit provenance literally was thrown away, and the ownership debate, focusing exclusively on the astrolabe, tracked immediately toward an emerging secular hero: Champlain.

Which still leaves us with the problem of how Champlain produced such rotten latitude figures for both Gould's Landing and Morrison Island in 1613. That he dead-reckoned his way from the first position to the second on a meandering diagonal course during a two-day portage that gave him "much trouble," producing a precise northerly distance between them, seems unlikely, although Professor Heidenreich feels it was within Champlain's capability.

I have another idea: that the explorer simply fudged the offending latitude figures in the *Voyages* by bumping up his true sightings exactly a full degree. No one, it appears, has ever questioned how this great navigator could have made the first glaring mistake, at Gould's Landing, so close to his previous latitude sighting at Chaudière Falls, and not have noticed. Publishing the figure for Chaudière Falls indicates he was rightly satisfied with it, as he was only out by 12 minutes. If a latitude reading of 46 degrees 40 minutes really was produced at Gould's Landing, Champlain immediately would have realized: *that's the same as my base at Quebec*. For he had produced a latitude of 46 2/3 for his nascent settlement at present-day Quebec City in 1609. Accepting the Gould's Landing sighting also required him to accept that, over a short stretch of the Ottawa River, he had somehow crabbed northwards 62 minutes, when in fact he had only gained 8 minutes. A navigator with not half his skill would have pronounced absurd the idea that, in just two days since leaving Chaudière Falls, he had gone almost 112 kilometres north, when his compass, the sun's westerly trajectory, and common sense told him he had paddled about sixty-five kilometres west. I don't think the navigator capable of dead reckoning along the difficult portage past the Calumet rapids could be the same navigator who failed to tweak to the illogic of his Gould's Landing latitude fix.

There are two possible explanations for deliberate deception, beyond a desire to mislead his Dutch and English exploration rivals. The first involves the past significance of latitude 46 in Champlain's affairs. The fur trading monopoly awarded by the French crown to his original benefactor, Dugua de Mons, in 1603, specified a territory between latitudes 40 and 46. Champlain had undertaken the journey up the Ottawa in 1613 under a new commission, received in November 1612 when de Mons arranged to have Henri de

Bourbon, a cousin of the French king, appointed Viceroy of New France. While latitude figures weren't mentioned in the new monopoly, latitude 46 may have survived as a geographic tripwire in Champlain's mind.

The new monopoly was hugely unpopular with French independent traders, particularly in St-Malo, and they did their best to oppose it and discredit Champlain personally. Having pressed into virgin territory in 1613, and with no other European witnesses to his progress except a translator he identified only as Thomas and the controversial Vignau (whose credibility Champlain would aggressively discredit), Champlain may have wanted to assert he had progressed *above* latitude 46 in order to prepare the way for establishing, should it be politically necessary, a trading monopoly that was separate from the disputed one based on the St. Lawrence.

Secondly, he could have fudged the latitude figures to keep his investors interested in continuing to pursue a profitable midcontinental route to a northern sea that ultimately would lead to the Orient. The latest monopoly was granted not just for furs, but also for the purpose of discovering and exploiting the speculated passage. And as Champlain lamented in his *Voyages* when forced to turn back at Morrison Island, "This northern sea cannot be farther off than 100 leagues of latitude; for I was in latitude 47." He was actually still below latitude 46, and I think he knew it.

In 1618, Champlain proposed to the Paris chamber of commerce that "One may hope to find a short route to China by way of the River St. Lawrence. ... it is certain that we shall succeed in finding it without much difficulty." How much of that bravura was salesmanship on which Champlain knew he couldn't deliver, and how much was genuine conviction on his part, is up for debate. But the published errors in his latitude sightings in 1613 seem to point not to a lost astrolabe, but to a misplaced integrity. And those silver cups that emerged from the bank of Buttermilk Creek along with the astrolabe in 1867 point right at the Jesuits. ■

Douglas Hunter is the author of twelve books. He has written widely on business, history, the environment, and sport. His study of the Nortel stock debacle, *The Bubble and the Bear*, won the 2002 National Business Book Award. He lives in Huronia, where he is now working on a new book about the exploration rivalry between Champlain and Henry Hudson.

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ET CETERA

The Cobden astrolabe can be seen at the Museum of Civilization, in Gatineau, Quebec, as well as in the Treasures Gallery of the museum's website: <http://www.civilization.ca/tresors/treasure/222eng.html>.

See the Canadiana Online website: <http://www.canadiana.org/eco/index.html> for the writings of Samuel de Champlain.

Trundling through Canada's big cities on their horse-drawn carts, collecting remains of this and

Rag-&-Bone Men

by Benita Baker

In 1915 when Lazarus Greenberg needed to earn money, he went to Ottawa City Hall and paid \$10 for a peddler's licence. "What else could I do?" he asked. "I had no trade so I became a peddler."

Peddler. The word conjures up an image of a turn-of-the-century immigrant with a pushcart, on foot, or on a horse and wagon, buying or selling almost anything—fruit, linens, rags, junk, old furniture. Also called rag-and-bone men, the peddlers changed the traditional notions of supply and demand. They were the first door-to-door salesmen, the first "recyclers," and the first to offer goods for sale on credit. Peddling enabled these immigrants to support their families and establish roots in a new and strange country.

Canada was the land of opportunity in the late 1800s. Booming lumber and grain exports created jobs, and the completion of the transcontinental railway opened the West for settlers. There weren't enough Canadians to fill these needs so the governments of Sir John A. Macdonald and later, Wilfrid Laurier, encouraged immigration to satisfy the demand for labourers and farmers. At the same time, economic and political conditions in Europe were worsening, especially for Russian Jews. They were forced to live in an area called the Pale of Settlement, a 160-kilometre strip of land on the western edge of Russia that stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Travel outside the Pale was forbidden and conditions within the Pale were oppressive. There were frequent government-sanctioned pogroms—random violent attacks against Jews and their property. Overpopulation, high unemployment, and extreme poverty abounded. Escape was the only solution. Between 1881 and 1914, 2.5 million Jews left Russia.

The more welcoming Canadian immigration policy coincided with this desperate need for refuge. Over 68,000 Jews arrived between 1900 and 1910, Lazarus Greenberg, his mother, and four siblings, among the massive flow of immigrants. His father had already settled in Ottawa seven years earlier and worked as a peddler and a teacher to raise enough money to bring over his family.

Their circumstance is typical of the Jewish immigrant experience. The intention of Canadian immigration policy in this period was to settle the West with agricultural workers, but only a small number of Jews actually became farmers.*

*In the Pale, Jews were forbidden from living in rural areas, so they had little agricultural experience. They were urban artisans, merchants, or tradesmen, not farmers. By 1911, fewer than six percent of Canadian Jews lived in rural areas.



CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES - PHOTOS 1914 / ITEM 616

that to bundle and sell, they were once familiar sights.



Peddling wasn't restricted to Jewish immigrants. It was an occupation typical of immigrants of many nationalities in the early twentieth century. Few could afford a store or inventory when they first arrived, but many were able to purchase small stocks that could be carried on pushcarts or wagons. Italian immigrants in this period, for instance, often became fruit peddlers as many of them were from southern Italy or Sicily, established centres of trade in perishable fruits and vegetables. Too, for many immigrants working seasonally as labourers, peddling generated winter income.

Chicken vendor (left) in Ottawa's Byward Market.

The majority settled in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg. Farming was a long-term commitment, and most immigrants arrived penniless and usually already in debt for loans taken to pay for steamship expenses and other travel costs. They had an immediate need for money to support a family or to send back to the old country.

Jews were already familiar with peddling; in the towns and villages of the Pale, itinerant salesmen were common. And peddling provided an instant source of income. It required no education, no skills, little knowledge of English, and only a small cash investment to get started. It also offered mobility and independence. Peddlers could choose when and where they worked. For religious Jews, this was

particularly important because it allowed them to observe Saturday, a working day in a six-day workweek, as the Sabbath.

Peddlers were both revered and reviled. A peddler could become successful, even prosperous, and was considered a role model in the immigrant Jewish community. When he was fifteen years old, Lazarus Greenberg was encouraged to quit his first job as a furniture polisher and peddle instead, because there was "a good future in peddling." Selling soft goods (linens and towels) or produce door to door wasn't easy, but it was considered an honest and respectable way to earn a living. An accomplished peddler could eventually afford a horse and buggy or to open a small store. Greenberg's role model was a government worker who left his low-paying job to peddle women's clothes. His success allowed him to eventually open two stores and become, in Greenberg's estimation, a wealthy man.

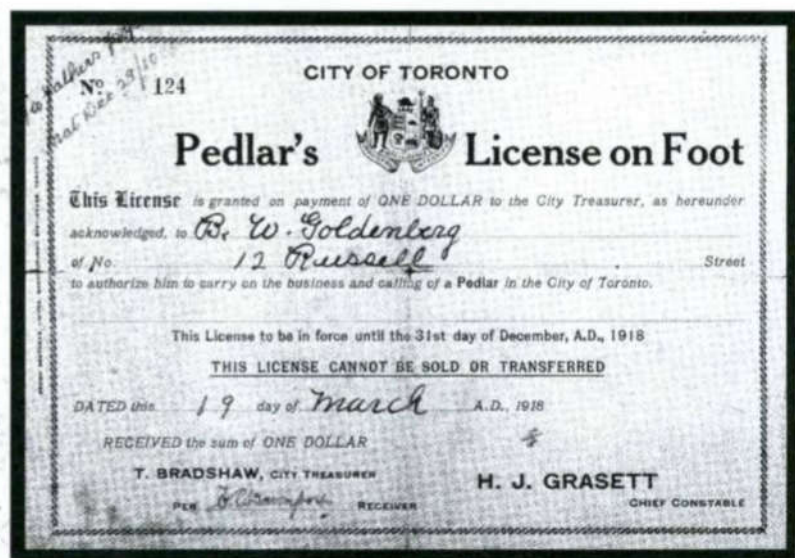
It really didn't matter what was sold as long as there was money to be made. Here the Jewish immigrants were resourceful. They turned waste into wealth by collecting anything that could be resold or recycled—scrap for steel mills, rags for reprocessing as cloth or paper, and bones for glue manufacturing or the making of china—thus earning the name "rag-and-bone man."

But outside the immigrant community, rag-and-bone men were shunned as scavengers and beggars. Their occupation was considered degrading. Signs were posted stating NO BEGGARS OR PEDDLERS ALLOWED. They were called "sheeny men," a derogatory name for Jews who collected and sold junk. They were equated to the bogeyman, and if children misbehaved parents would threaten to sell them to the sheeny. Former Ontario cabinet minister Allan Grossman was the son of a rag-and-bone man. In his

biography, Grossman recalls that "it was almost a daily occurrence for father to have stones thrown at him or have his beard pulled by young hoodlums, sometimes encouraged by adults."

In 1912, *Maclean's* magazine described the plight of a junk peddler:

... the sheeny you can see frequenting the lanes and uttering raucous cries of "rags, bones and bottles. Any rags today lady?" They are usually dressed in clothing that was made for somebody else and are adorned ... with whiskers. ... Little hunch-backed cigarette-smoking men, they are out with their push carts shortly after day-



Advertisement (left) from an 1897 Yiddish calendar inviting peddlers to order their supplies from James A. Ogilvy & Sons of Montreal. Peddler's licence (above), Toronto, 1918.

light, and they continue their toil many hours after the union Canadian workman has gone home for the night. The calves of their legs are familiar with dogs' fangs; other parts of their bodies are acquainted with Christian boots, yet ... how joyfully they toil. ... Most of them have come to us from Russia where their lives were never safe.

It didn't matter to the peddlers that some thought their line of work one step above charity. Many a factory owner, shopkeeper, or scrap dealer began as a peddler and many a family survived on a peddler's income. This was a source of pride and self-respect that far outweighed any insults. Their overriding goal was to "make it" in the new world because this meant security and the assurance of a better life.

During his thirty years as a peddler, Lazarus Greenberg entered thousands of homes. His arrival promised convenience and luxury, so he was warmly welcomed. He also sold on credit: Customers paid him in weekly installments for merchandise they would otherwise not have been able to own if they had to pay cash in full. Soon retail stores entered the credit arrangement. A peddler's customer could present the peddler's card to a store and buy merchandise without cash payment, much like the way credit cards are used today. Like a credit-card company, the peddler would pay the store (at a discounted price), then collect from the customer. Fortunately for the consumer, there was no interest charged on the money borrowed.

Collecting the twenty- or twenty-five-cent payments was not always easy. Greenberg remembers that "you had to be there on the spot when they got their pay or the money was gone 1-2-3." He lost over eight thousand dollars during the Depression when several of his customers left Ottawa to find

work in the Detroit car factories, leaving behind their unpaid debts.

The peddlers went anywhere there was a buyer—across the city, into the fledgling suburbs, out to the countryside. Canadians everywhere regularly encountered peddlers or had a direct connection to one. They may have been peddlers themselves, had a relative who peddled, or been a peddler's customer. Peddling affected everyone. It made life easier for consumers, expanded markets for suppliers, and transformed the immigrants from newcomer to citizen.

Peddling is now consigned to the history books, but the peddler's legacy endures. Until the peddler came along, who could shop from home or buy on credit what was otherwise unaffordable? Until the rag-and-bone man came along, who would have imagined being paid for a broken household item or torn clothing? Peddlers changed the way people shopped, what they bought, and what had value. And all it took was determination and a \$10 licence. ■

Benita Baker is an Ottawa writer with a special interest in history and culture. Her grandfather was a successful immigrant peddler who became a store owner. Her web address is <<http://members.rogers.com/benita.baker>>.

ET CETERA

Jewish Life in Canada by William Kurelek and Abraham Arnold. Hurtig, Edmonton, 1976.

A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada by Irving Abella. Lester & Orpen Dennys, Toronto, 1990.

A voice on the left – that was the impulse for the *Winnipeg Citizen*. Then the real world intruded.

by Noelle Boughton

The People's Paper

March 1, 1948: Winnipeggers shuffled to their stoops to collect the new *Winnipeg Citizen*, but it wasn't there. After waiting two years for the birth of the world's first cooperatively owned daily, they were disappointed to find delivery boys still milling on street corners and the new vending boxes standing empty. Where was the *Citizen*, the first paper to be owned and controlled by its readers?

It was struggling for life in the basement of a two-storey walk-up in Winnipeg's North End. Production started on time, but the new high-speed Goss press was not thoroughly tested before publication. Static tore the newsprint, and by the time the staff headed out to start the deliveries, irate subscribers had already jammed the *Citizen's* switchboard.

Winnipeg, a city of 300,000, had been a two-newspaper town since 1920 when the Sifton family's *Free Press* swallowed the *Telegram*. The *Winnipeg Free Press* advocated for the Liberals while Southam's *Winnipeg Tribune*, with half its circulation, defended the Conservatives. But many on the social and political left of Canada's fourth-largest city felt their interests were being ignored. They, like many today, were concerned about the impact of media ownership.

Feelings around the *Citizen* ran high because it was the culmination of many dreams. Winnipeg had a vital leftist community—a mix of English trade unionists, immigrants, and intellectuals who had galvanized during the 1919 General Strike and were still a formidable force in the city. They had been strongly represented on city council and, by 1945, seen not only the

renewed growth of many trade unions but the ascent of the young Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) to the province's official Opposition. There was also support in this quarter for the Labour Progressive Party (L.P.P.), which was the name the Communist Party took when it was banned in World War II, and for Manitoba's cooperatives, which had spent two decades gaining influence over the province's gasoline, financial, and grocery systems to put profits back in the hands of the average person. All wanted fairer coverage as their interests and activities were often neglected in the city's two major papers. In the past, many of those disaffected with the status quo had dreamed of starting a new paper, but they had put their aspirations on hold during the Depression and war years. Now, with the war over and cautious optimism dawning, the *Citizen's* organizers believed there was a strong enough base among these Winnipeg groups to support a new and exciting initiative. The spark that lit their collective imagination flared in late 1945.

In November, as Manitoba's soldiers were returning home from World War II, the International Typographical Union launched a fight to reduce its printers' work week from forty-six to forty hours, while maintaining the same salary. This would be, in effect, a wage increase, which required the approval of the Wartime Labour Relations Board, responsible for regulating pay and working conditions during and just after the war. When the union, known to be in the vanguard of change for its workers, made its demand to the *Free Press's* Victor Sifton and *Tribune's* Wes McCurdy as part of a new contract, the Winnipeg publishers rightfully refused, saying it had to go to the labour board. The I.T.U. insisted the forty-hour work week could not be arbitrated.

Late November 8, after several attempts to negotiate this thorny issue, 127 *Free Press* and *Tribune* printers started an illegal strike by going into a "continuous meeting" at the Labor Temple. The two papers were forced to stop publishing for a day—the first time Winnipeg was without a paper since the 1919 strike.

By November 10, the two publishers were producing a hybrid, the *Free Press-Tribune*, from the *Free Press* in downtown Winnipeg. It was an eight-column, eight-page paper with no advertising or comics. Both staffs provided stories, condensed by a battery of rewrite men and transcribed onto electric typewriters to be

ers. Ferns, a Marxist whose grandfather had been a printer, believed in the printers' cause, but also thought a third daily would be a great opportunity to provide Winnipeg with a newspaper that had a more progressive, democratic viewpoint. He sought support from Dave Simkin, the left-leaning manager of his family's printing business, Israelite Press. Simkin, however, was initially skeptical about the economics of a third paper until Chicago newspaper baron Marshall Field, an alumnus of Ferns's alma mater, Cambridge University, responded positively to Ferns's request for support. Winnipeg, Field said, was ripe for a progressive paper, though he could not financially support it himself. His interest in publishing a progressive paper renewed, Simkin approached J.B. (Jock) Brown to help realize the idea.

Jock Brown, in his late forties, had been a Manitoba farmer before becoming the founding general manager of the Canadian Co-operative Implements Limited farm machinery co-op in the early 1940s. A staunch socialist with business experience, prominent in the province's co-op movement, he refused to have anything to do with the paper unless it was a nonprofit co-op. He believed that was the only way to both raise money and involve the average person in directing the venture.

Ferns and Simkin agreed, and by April 1946, Brown had developed Ferns's initial concept into a prospectus. In it, he lashed out against the few who controlled the news. He promised the paper would have unsensational reporting, no party lines, and plenty of analysis and news backgrounders. It was to be an informational forum for workers and not just a vehicle—as he believed the more traditional papers were—for those interests supporting the press barons. Anyone could buy a five-dollar share and become a voting member. But regardless of the amount invested, there was only one vote per person. Brown later said he envisioned an eight-page, left-leaning tabloid with virtually no ads.

That April, the Winnipeg Citizen Co-operative Publishing Co. Ltd.'s general by-laws were drawn up and its charter of incorporation granted to Ferns, Brown, and seven colleagues. This group plus two others established a provisional board and a downtown office, then recruited eager students, striking printers, and unionists to knock on doors and speak at meetings. Their job was to raise \$150,000—\$50,000 in five-dollar shares and \$100,000 in fifty-dollar loans. Districts were established with one delegate elected per 200 members. They were to hold annual meetings, elect the twelve-member board, and oversee the new paper's reserve fund.



A graduate in arts of Manitoba and Queen's universities, HENRY S. FERNS has been appointed associate professor in history at United College. He will assume his new duties Jan. 3.

Henry Stanley Ferns (1913–1992) was born in Calgary and educated at the University of Manitoba, Queen's University, and Trinity College, Cambridge. A civil servant during World War II, he worked on the secretarial staff of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, then in External Affairs, before pursuing an academic career, first at United College in Winnipeg, then at the University of Birmingham in England. With Winnipeg printer Dave Simkin and Canadian Co-operative Implements Limited general manager Jock Brown, he was instrumental in laying the foundation for the *Winnipeg Citizen*.

Support for the *Citizen* was not as easy to garner as the organizers initially hoped. Not everyone the fundraisers approached agreed that Winnipeg needed a new daily. The notion also got caught in union dissension over supporting the I.T.U. strike. The I.T.U.'s sister unions, the *Free Press* and *Tribune* pressmen and stereotypers, had walked out in support, but had returned to work under orders from their international after an arbitrator ruled against them. With this break in solidarity, sympathy in other union communities waned. Meanwhile, sympathy strikes the I.T.U. organized in May 1946 among printers at other Southam papers to force the *Tribune* to settle had proved unsuccessful. The Winnipeg strike was dribbling into failure, never to be resolved.

Despite this difficult climate, the *Citizen's* organizers were still committed to the idea of a cooperatively owned paper and aimed to publish in the fall of 1947. Jock Brown started constructing offices on the second floor of the Simkins' plant, where the *Citizen* would be printed on contract. But when the family decided its flat-bed press, used for the strikers' papers, *Free Press* ad sheets, and small Jewish and co-op weeklies, was too small for a large daily,

it appealed to the *Citizen* to help pay for a new high-speed rotary press costing \$125,000. Brown travelled to the I.T.U. headquarters in Indianapolis and procured \$80,000 on condition that the *Citizen* hire its striking printers. Ferns and Simkin then bought a new press in Chicago that could print 30,000 folded copies per hour.

By late 1947, the *Citizen's* board began recruiting its key staff. The C.C.E., which was keenly interested in the *Citizen* offering a more progressive viewpoint, wanted King Gordon to become its publisher and editor. The son of Winnipeg author Charles Gordon (who wrote under the pen name Ralph Connor), King had been forced to leave Montreal's United Theological Seminary in the 1930s ostensibly because of his leftist views. Gordon, in New York covering the United Nations for *The Nation*, declined, ruling out the one opportunity the *Citizen* had for engaging an editor with a leftist perspective.

In a moment that marked the new venture's departure from its original concept of a left-leaning alternative, the *Citizen's* board turned instead to more traditional newspapermen. It started by hiring Regina *Leader-Post* general manager Jack Sweeney as its publisher and general

manager. The sixty-five-year-old Irishman had had a long *Free Press* career. He hired several former and current *Free Press* staff—Bill Metcalfe, a former CBC senior news editor, as managing editor, Harvey Dryden as sports editor, and Wilf Joyce as circulation manager—plus editors and a comptroller from the *Vancouver News Herald*, *Calgary Albertan*, and *Regina Leader-Post*. Iock Brown later explained these hirings were the best way to ensure the paper was launched, even though it meant trading leftist ideology for traditional media experience.

While many of these staff were excited by the prospect of a new paper, they were not as sympathetic to its ideals as some of the young, and often inexperienced, reporters hired. These included Margaret Laurence, a recent United College grad who had launched a radio column and would cover labour, and Fred Wilmot from Vancouver, Winnipeg's first black reporter. There were also a few other notables who joined this lineup, often for salaries as low as \$25 to \$50 a week or 35 to 50 cents a printed inch for stringers. Patricia Blondal, who later wrote *A Candle to Light the Sun*, became a women's news reporter. James Gray, who had resigned as the *Free Press*'s Ottawa correspondent after a policy disagreement, provided "The Winter Years" column on his Depression experiences. It ran in the *Citizen* from April 3 to June 7, 1948.³

Sweeney's next challenge was to find newsprint, which was in short supply. Seven percent of Canada's newsprint was allocated for Canadian publishers under postwar agreements, but when Dave Simkin approached several companies in February 1947, he could not buy any. Harry Ferns, by then the *Citizen*'s president, wrote Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, suggesting the government establish an export quota so there would be enough newsprint for a new paper. Nothing changed, and it took more than a year of making various appeals before Sweeney was finally able to wring a three-month stock from Manitoba's Abitibi. But there was no promise of more.

Meanwhile, the *Citizen* had not met its fundraising goal. By the time it published, it only had 12,000 members and \$120,000 in capital—\$86,000 of which it had spent on the press, organization, and office equipment. When the press was delayed, it bumped its publication date back to February 1, then March 1, 1948. When the press finally arrived, the



Among the future literary luminaries who wrote for the *Winnipeg Citizen* were James Gray (1906–1998), whose social histories such as *Booze* and *The Winter Years* illustrated Prairie life during Prohibition years and the Depression, and Margaret Laurence (1926–1987), whose novels including *A Jest of God* and *The Diviners* likewise drew on her experience living in a small Prairie town.

Simkins knocked out their field-stone wall to drag it into the basement.

When the *Winnipeg Citizen* was finally delivered on March 1, its editors had crafted a traditional twenty-page paper filled with news shorts, congratulations, and promises that bore no resemblance

to the eight-page alternative tabloid Brown had originally envisioned. It was actually a rather poor traditional paper with a picture of Winnipeg mayor Garnet Coulter flipping the press switch, his greetings joined by Premier Stuart Garson's. The front page featured Canada's world-champion figure skater, Barbara Ann Scott, plus news of the Stern gang killings in Palestine. "A Statement of Faith and Policy" promised the *Citizen* would stand for democracy and provide full and impartial coverage of all important questions, but the news and editorial fare were undistinguished, even for a mainstream paper. But that didn't stop Winnipeggers from snapping up the first edition and the *Free Press* giving it an editorial welcome—"Competition is healthy and exhilarating, the more there is of it, the better." The *Tribune* ignored it.

The *Citizen* struggled from the start to gain sufficient national and international news. Sweeney tried to contract Canadian Press, the cooperative news service, but it wanted an exorbitant \$83,000 entry fee and \$9,500 annual fee. Sweeney then tried to compensate by hiring Ottawa and Toronto stringers and contracting with the American Hearst Corporation's International News Service. INS later sued the *Citizen* for \$54,400 for breach of contract when it changed to the Chicago Tribune–New York Times Service for better coverage. The *Citizen*'s editors, meanwhile, tried to address the national news problem by first copying nightly radio newscasts into briefs, labelled "Special to the *Citizen*," then arranging to have staff pick up a bundle of CP's Broadcast News briefs nightly from a local radio station. This continued until CP grew suspicious and began planting clues in its various radio stations' copy. When it finally identified that the *Citizen* was getting its illegal feed from CJOB, CP shut down the innovative news relay.

By June 1948, the *Citizen*'s problems were beginning to affect the staff. Deficient advertising meant a financial shortfall, so Sweeney asked the staff to help the paper's finances by contributing some of its pay to the *Winnipeg Citizen* Employees Savings Fund. This raised about \$2,300. Staff was

³The columns were to be collected into a book that the Israelite Press planned to publish. But legend has it that one night the compositors ran out of type, so Feivel Simkin—Dave's dad and the Israelite Press's owner—handed them Gray's typeset columns to melt. James Gray's award-winning book of the same name, *The Winter Years*, was not published until 1966.

"The idea that was born with the *Citizen* will not die. The people of Winnipeg have blazed the trail. They have shown the way to a truly free press. If not here in Winnipeg, then surely somewhere else in the democratic world the idea will take root and flourish."

prepared to help, but some members grew unhappy when they learned that the I.T.U. printers were receiving overtime pay while they were not. This resulted in about three-quarters of the sixty business, editorial, and circulation staff forming the Canadian Newspaper Guild, which was chartered by the Canadian Congress of Labour.

By this point, the *Citizen's* limited newsprint supply was also expiring. The *Citizen* cut the weekend comics, adopted a streamlined twelve-page format, and asked readers to write their MPs, believing that either the other papers were trying to squeeze it out of business or Canadian companies were selling too much paper to the Americans. Winnipeg C.C.F. MP Stanley Knowles championed the cause federally and the Combines Investigation Branch conducted an investigation. When officials decided there was no anti-*Citizen* conspiracy, Sweeney continued his appeals to company executives; only days before the initial supply was gone, Abitibi extended another limited supply.

The *Citizen*, meanwhile, was being smeared with allegations that it was communist—even as many of Winnipeg's old left were becoming frustrated that the paper wasn't progressive enough. At a time when anticommunist feelings had begun to swell (though yet to reach the McCarthy era's height), the *Brandon Daily Sun* accused it in a summer editorial of being communist. The *Sun* eventually printed a retraction, but the incident heightened managing editor Bill Metcalfe's fear that communists were trying to usurp the co-op by electing their delegates to the annual meeting. L.P.P. provincial secretary Bill Ross, one of those disillusioned with the *Citizen's* poor left-wing coverage, said Chester King, the president of the Winnipeg and District Trades and Labor Council, was the only card-carrying Communist on the board, and he represented labour, not the party. Ironically, the council complained to Metcalfe that it did not want Margaret Laurence covering its meetings since it believed she was a communist. Laurence and her new husband, Jack, lived in a suite at Ross's and had many friends who favoured the old left. But she resigned when she heard the allegations and, years later, said, "I never joined any political party in my life, to tell you the truth. But I was quite left-wing, and still am."

As the *Citizen* approached its first birthday, its year-long circulation slide began to reverse, and it received another infusion of \$31,550 in loans from Manitoba Pool Elevators, Winnipeg Typographical Union, and Canadian Co-operative Implements Ltd. But Sweeney arrived at the after-hours birthday bash on March 1, 1949, a weary man and said, "It's been a tough struggle." His voice dropped. "And it's still going to be tough. Whether we're going to survive or not is still in the lap of the gods."

Most of the staff was more optimistic. *Citizen* columnist

Jean Hinds admitted to her readers that day that she had written a heart-wrenching farewell column during the harrowing year, but lost it and now did not think she would need it. News editor Pat Patterson embodied the group's spirit by announcing at the party that "outside of the big financial problem which Mr. Sweeney has, I think all other factors are definitely improving." Staff joshed about the *Citizen* lasting at least another year—if not forever.

By March 17, however, the *Citizen* was appealing for more circulation and funds to sustain it, but its record of too

many financial appeals, middle-of-the-road editorials, and its poor coverage of its founding supporters' causes worked against it. The board failed to attract another \$40,000 each from the I.T.U. and Manitoba Pool Elevators to continue. At the prompting of a senior editor who wrote that the *Citizen* would provide more C.C.F. and labour coverage in return for increased support, Stanley Knowles made an appeal. But the communists, C.C.F., and labour unions were all tired of empty promises, and declined. By the end of March, the remaining employees considered, then dropped, a proposal to buy the paper. Finally, on April 4, the *Citizen* could not meet its payroll. About 900 supporters attended an emergency meeting and raised \$7,200 in cash and loans, but the paper was \$9,300 behind in wages and \$140,000 in debt.

The *Citizen* continued publishing until April 13. Even then, Sweeney announced in the last issue that negotiations were still underway to put the paper under private ownership. But it was too late. After thirteen months and thirteen days, the *Citizen* declared bankruptcy. In the last of a series of front-page editorials during the dying days, Jock Brown still clung to the hope there could be a democratically owned paper: "The idea that was born with the *Citizen* will not die. The people of Winnipeg have blazed the trail. They have shown the way to a truly free press. If not here in Winnipeg, then surely somewhere else in the democratic world the idea will take root and flourish."

It was a noble dream, but much too ambitious for the co-op's budget: it struggled for funds from the start. When the board hired traditional newspaper staff to ensure its advent, its fate as an alternative publication was sealed. It probably could only have succeeded if it stuck to its original concept of being a small, left-wing tabloid. But when it became a poor hybrid of dream and daily, it alienated much of its natural constituency. It was a bold plan for average people to influence their media, but its short life left only some great stories and valuable lessons—and a fascinating footnote in Canadian media history. ■

Noelle Boughton, a former Manitoban, is a Toronto writer.

Pioneer anthropologist Thomas McIlwraith did more than observe. He participated. Sometimes



Weena: Thomas McIlwraith among the Bella Coola

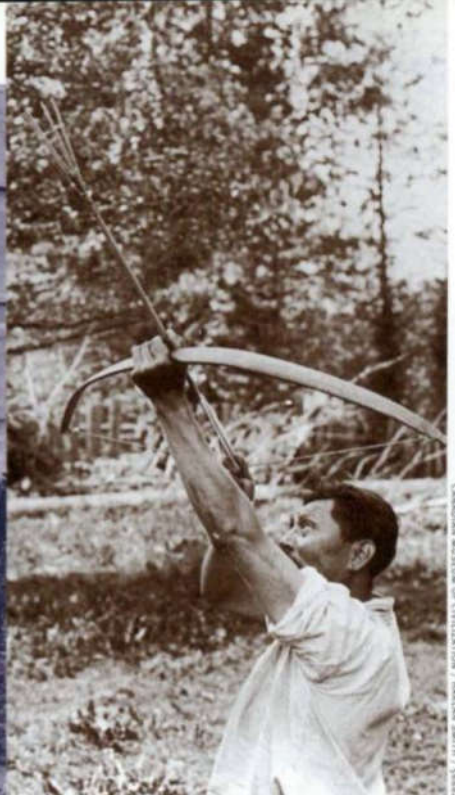
by Paula Wild

When Hamilton, Ontario-born anthropologist Thomas McIlwraith travelled to British Columbia's remote central coast to study the Nuxalkmc (formerly the Bella Coola Indians) in 1922, he had no idea that he would be breaking the law by participating in illegal ceremonies. Nonetheless, on more than one occasion, he wore a supernatural mosquito mask and darted around the Nuxalk Hall like a hungry insect.

"I'm supposed to keep up a steady buzz and carry a small stick in my mouth with which I occasionally rush one of the spectators," the twenty-two-year-old wrote his father. "But it's hard to see through the mask and I keep bumping into the wood heater. This job of mine is certainly a queer one!"

McIlwraith, who received a degree in anthropology from Cambridge University after serving in the army overseas in World War I, was practising the Cambridge style of anthropology. This meant that researchers completely immersed themselves in the language and culture of a native tribe in some distant land, ideally becoming a friend of one's informants. Due to long-distance travel, researchers usually made only one field trip during their study, their objective being to thoroughly understand their subjects before returning home to present their findings. The central coast of B.C. was not as remote as some parts of the world—McIlwraith was able to make two trips to B.C.'s central coast—but the methodology

when he shouldn't have.



From left:
Thomas McIlwraith (far left)
in ceremonial regalia. On
his second venture to Bella
Coola in 1923, he was
invited to participate in the
Nuxalk winter ceremonials.

Joshua Moody, whom
McIlwraith described as
one of the most intelligent
people men he had ever
known. One of the first
Nuxalk to adopt Christian-
ity, Moody was a faithful
follower of his new religion
and spent much time
contemplating life.

Reuben Schooner watches
as his wife makes nettle
fiber. Nettles were picked,
dried, and then spun into a
strong twinelike rope.

Jim Pollard was a practical
man, equally adept at tasks
involving the old ways of
life or newer ventures.
McIlwraith found him a
logical and well-spoken
informant and considered
him a good businessman.
Pollard often gave bow-and-
arrow or other demonstra-
tions for Harlan Smith, an
archaeologist who took
numerous photographs in
the Bella Coola Valley
during the early 1920s.

was the same. The fruits of his labour, the two-volume book, *The Bella Coola Indians*, remains the most comprehensive study of a Canadian Pacific Northwest Culture to date, used as a reference by many, including the Nuxalkmc themselves. In 1925, a year after leaving Bella Coola, McIlwraith joined the University of Toronto as Canada's first full-time academic anthropologist. For the next eight years, he was the only anthropologist teaching in the country.

It was a letter from Edward Sapir, the first director of the anthropology division of the Victoria Memorial Museum¹, offering a job studying the Bella Coola Indians that set Thomas McIlwraith, then teaching at St. John's College, Cambridge, on his career path.

It didn't take him long to find a room in the tiny settlement of Bella Coola, 430 kilometres north of Vancouver; the problem was finding subjects to interview. To begin with, it was early spring and most Nuxalkmc were away working at coastal canneries. But three older men – Joshua Moody, "Captain" Reuben Schooner, and Jim Pollard – remained in the village and were willing to speak with McIlwraith. Their English was limited, however, and McIlwraith's knowledge of the Nuxalk language was nil.

Although young, McIlwraith was resourceful. He spent several weeks learning Chinook, a combination of First Nations' languages, English, and French that was still spoken on the coast. But he soon discovered that while Chinook might be adequate for talking about fishing, hunting, and trading, it left much to be desired when it came to discussing religion, philosophy, or culture. So McIlwraith began learning the Nuxalk language. Once Moody, Schooner, and Pollard realized that he was genuinely interested in their traditions, they welcomed him as a confidant. "They resent the condescension with which most white men regard them so that contact with one who was friendly and sympathetic came as a pleasant surprise," McIlwraith noted in *The Bella Coola Indians*. And he was honoured when he heard a Nuxalk person refer to him as a "good white man."

¹Today's Canadian Museum of Civilization.

In *The Bella Coola Indians* McIlwraith refers to Moody and Pollard as "two of the most intelligent men I have ever met," and describes Moody as "not particularly practical, subject to fits of anger or moroseness, but with a meditative temperament which delights in seeking biblical parallels and synonyms for Bella Coola practices, his is the kind of mind, which in other walks of life, would have produced the professor of philosophy."

McIlwraith continued:

Schooner ... perhaps came nearest to the original, uncontaminated Bella Coola type. Heavy in build, coarse in humour and expression, he had a heart of gold and was a fine example of a native gentleman. He was glad to assist most patiently in recording ancient lore, being intensely proud of the traditions of his ancestors. A friendship developed from this, which is one of the writer's happiest memories. Often in the evenings life in general was discussed, the war, the rush of progress in big cities, the quest for wealth, the spread of white civilization, and the problems raised by the contact of peoples. ... With sadness, but without bitterness, he used to speak of the approaching end of Bella Coola culture, and his words brought home the tragedy which the spread of civilization brings to so many, and the responsibility resting upon the white people as a whole.

McIlwraith's goal was to "record the life of the Indian as it was before white man came." Unfortunately, ancient traditions had already been seriously eroded by the dominant European culture, and McIlwraith found the Nuxalk people's lifestyle much different than what it had been before. By the 1920s, the Nuxalk economy was shifting from a traditional way of life revolving around fishing, hunting, and food gathering to one based on industrial values where people worked for wages. And, like many First Nations, diseases such as smallpox, consumption, and measles had taken their toll. In 1850 the Nuxalk population was around 2,000; by 1922 it hovered at 300, causing McIlwraith to worry that "within a short time there will be no ethnological work possible [here]."

McIlwraith's contract ended in August 1922, but he was offered another one in the fall of 1923. Upon his arrival he learned that Schooner had died. Unfortunately, Schooner had been the only Nuxalk who remembered all the old songs and stories. On his previous visit McIlwraith had recorded many of Schooner's songs, and the two men had become so close that Schooner adopted McIlwraith. Because of this—and also because there was no one else to fill the void—the Nuxalkmc allowed McIlwraith to take Schooner's place in the upcoming winter ceremonies²—an unusual decision.

McIlwraith's second visit to the valley was dramatically different than the first. After a full day of interviewing, he, along with most of the Nuxalk community and some other valley residents, gathered at the Nuxalk Hall at 6:00 P.M. Part of McIlwraith's role in the ceremonies was to give a welcoming speech in Nuxalk and invite everyone to enjoy the feast. As



master of ceremonies, McIlwraith was supposed to serve himself first. The first night the food was a mixture of eulachon "grease" (the oil from fermented smelt-sized fish) and crabapples. Grease has a particularly pungent aroma and McIlwraith was sure he was going to be sick. But, good sport that he was, he managed to perform his duty graciously.

As everyone ate, McIlwraith ducked into the back room to don his dance regalia. When he reappeared the crowd shouted, "Weena! Weena!"—one of his nicknames. Weena, meaning warrior or raider, is a shortened version of Winwina, the central character in McIlwraith's favourite Nuxalk story. After McIlwraith's performance, various Nuxalk presented other dances and songs. In ancient times the role of a singer was an honoured position and several people dedicated themselves to memorizing the words. But after Schooner's death, Pollard was the only one who remembered any of the old songs. Since Pollard found it difficult to always recall all the words, he asked McIlwraith to write them in his notebook.

Once the novelty of McIlwraith giving the welcoming speech and serving the food wore

²During the spring, summer, and fall the Nuxalk hunted, fished, gathered food, and worked in the commercial fishing industry; the winter months were reserved for elaborate ceremonies such as potlaches. These feasts, which lasted several days, involved a public distribution of gifts and were a traditional way to verify the rights to use certain names, fishing areas, or dancing. As the early Nuxalk did not have a written language, these rituals were an important way for people to establish their status and commemorate significant people, places, and events. The Nuxalk also had three secret societies that performed special dances, songs, and rituals throughout the winter ceremonies.



Schooner (far left) wearing the Echo mask, a complex design with six different mouths that can be removed and attached as desired. One of the few old Nuxalk masks remaining in the Bella Coola Valley, it is on permanent display at the Bella Coola Credit Union. Jim Pollard (left) posing in ceremonial regalia; above, a view of a Nuxalk village from the Bella Coola River circa 1920.

off, he was allowed to concentrate on his role as recorder and prompter. He sat next to Pollard scribbling notes or waiting for the Nuxalk to jab him with an elbow indicating that he had forgotten the next verse. By the end of the ceremonial season, McIlwraith had recorded approximately 120 Nuxalk songs on fifty wax cylinders. And even though he was often up until midnight, he still had enough energy to attend dances in the Norwegian community (a group that had moved to the valley in 1894), administer first aid when the local doctor was drunk, and serve as best man at a wedding.

Of course the ceremonies had changed radically. To begin with, they no longer took place in a longhouse lit by an open fire. Instead, they were performed in a European-style building equipped with kerosene lamps. And traditional potlatch gifts of dried berries, salmon, or mountain-goat wool had been replaced by sacks of potatoes and carrots or cans of peaches. But even though some elements had changed, the rituals were still taken seriously. At each event there was always a certain amount of tension and the very real possibility of violence if a person performed a story, song, or dance that they did not own the rights to. In 1915, just seven years before McIlwraith first visited the valley, two women from Kimsquit had been murdered

over a dispute regarding the use of ancestral names. And, according to McIlwraith, one of the names he inherited from Schooner gave him the right to kill anyone who made a mistake while performing a ceremony. While European influence had pretty well put an end to this practice, suspicious deaths still occurred—rumour had it that Schooner had been killed by witchcraft.

Whether he knew it or not, by participating in the ancient Nuxalk dances, McIlwraith was committing a criminal act. In 1884, influenced by missionaries working in the field,



Thomas Forsyth McIlwraith (1899–1964) spent about ten months in two stints working with the Nuxalkmc between 1922 and 1924. Considered a hardworking, meticulous, and imaginative investigator, he fully participated in an entire season of winter ceremonials and was given unusual access to the songs, myths, and ceremonials of the Nuxalkmc. In doing so, he not only documented Nuxalk traditions for the world at large, he sparked a revival of some traditions among the Nuxalkmc themselves. However, due to the priggishness of his editors in the 1920s who regarded some of his material as obscene, his seminal work *The Bella Coola Indians* was not published until 1948.



McIlwraith formed a close relationship with "Captain" Reuben Schooner (right), who eventually adopted him. After Schooner's death, McIlwraith took his place in the winter ceremonials.

as part of its effort to assimilate natives, the federal government banned potlatches. By outlawing First Nations' ceremonies, it was hoped that natives would turn to Christianity and thus be more easily assimilated into the new, predominant culture. Those that enforced the law usually interpreted the prohibition to include all First Nations' gatherings. Due to the isolated location, however, the Nuxalk could generally practise their ceremonies openly. In fact, McIlwraith's interest in the rituals actually led to a minirevival of the old dances and songs. And McIlwraith found taking part in the dances an invaluable experience, writing "Although the old customs had broken down enormously, this actual participation enabled me to understand the winter dances in a manner impossible from mere description."

When McIlwraith left Bella Coola in February 1924, he had accumulated an enormous body of research. His acceptance by the Nuxalkmc and close friendships with many of them had provided him with extraordinary access to traditional songs, myths, and ceremonies. In Ontario, McIlwraith converted his notes into a 2,000-page manuscript, but when he presented it to the museum they were horrified by the inclusion of what they considered crude and obscene stories. Numerous Nuxalk stories contain graphic references to extraordinarily long penises, sexual organs on foreheads, and various activities related to the anus. In an effort to placate the museum, McIlwraith rewrote the entire book, cut-

ting some of the text and translating offensive words into Latin. Unfortunately, by the time he finished, Canada was in the midst of the Depression and there was no money available for publication. McIlwraith's manuscript languished in the museum archives until the Canadian Social Science Research Council took over the project in the mid-1940s. *The Bella Coola Indians* was finally published in 1948, twenty-three years after McIlwraith had completed his first draft.

In the preface McIlwraith expresses his deep appreciation of the Nuxalkmc: "Without their generous, kindly, and helpful co-operation, this book could never have been written. I came as an uninvited stranger; they treated me as a friend and a guest and I left with intense regret. ... The aid of these men and women is one of my pleasantest memories." McIlwraith sincerely felt that the Bella Coola were "my people, not a group in which I was interested because they had, or had not, certain culture traits with which I was concerned."

Throughout his career, McIlwraith strove to make anthropology readily accessible and to expand its acceptance as an academic discipline. In doing so, he often went against accepted practice and encouraged students to handle exhibits even if it meant the occasional artifact got broken. For a time the only anthropologist teaching in Canada, he was, by the mid-1940s, heading a department of three at the University of Toronto. Among other positions, he also served as chairman of the Canadian Social Science Research Council, president of the Royal Canadian Institute, and chairman of the Advisory Board for the Protection of Archaeological and Historical Sites of Ontario. When he died in 1964, there were seventy professional anthropologists employed throughout the nation. McIlwraith believed that anthropology was "everybody's business" and frequently lectured on the topic in an effort to convince people that knowledge of different cultures could promote understanding and tolerance worldwide. ■

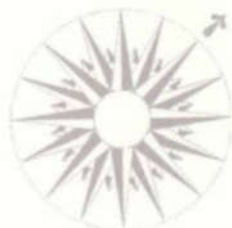
Paula Wild is a freelance writer based in Courtenay, B.C. She is the author of *One River, Two Cultures: A History of the Bella Coola Valley*, published in 2004 by Harbour Publishing.

ET CETERA

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Tactical to Practical | Mondays at 8 p.m. ET

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7 Docs for 7 Films | December 27 to January 2 at 8 p.m. ET

History Television puts forward the facts and offers the interpretations. During this special week of programming enjoy seven compelling documentaries that chronicle major world events, such as Pearl Harbor and the Great Escape, and then watch a historical dramatic film inspired by the same event.



Winston Churchill Day | Sunday, January 23

History Television pays tribute to one of the world's most heroic figures on the 40th anniversary of his death. A new three-part series on *Sir Winston Churchill* examines how he became the man that he was and how his overwhelming sense of destiny altered the course of history.



Barbarians | Coming in January

Savage tribes who hurl themselves repeatedly against the bastions of civilization, barbarians are violent forces from the dark beyond. Aided by cinematic re-creations, this dramatic new series recounts the astonishing sagas of the Vikings, Goths, Mongols and Huns.

An aerial view of RCAF Station Goose Bay in 1942 showing the Canadian installations to the north and east and the smaller American presence to the south.



Bombs in the Bush

by Robert J. Burns **Once upon a time, the Americans hid atomic bombs in Labrador. Seemed like a good idea at the time.**

On the night of November 10, 1950, a squadron of B-50 heavy bombers made its way from Goose Bay, Labrador, to its Strategic Air Command base in Arizona. As one aircraft approached the lower St. Lawrence River, near Rivière du Loup, about 160 kilometres downstream from Quebec City, first one and then a second of its four engines began to malfunction. Following standard emergency procedures, the crew jettisoned its load, then safely touched down at the nearest American base in Maine. A cover story—that conventional bombs had been dumped in an emergency—was concocted, but the

B-36 Peacemaker heavy bomber at Goose Air Base maintenance hangar, circa 1955.



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bomb was not conventional. It was a single 10,000-pound Mark IV atomic bomb, a variant of the Fat Boy atomic bomb that had destroyed Nagasaki five years earlier. The bomb did not contain its plutonium core, so there was no nuclear reaction, but the explosion 760 metres over the middle of the river shook residents on both shores of the St. Lawrence. They would not learn the true nature of the noise for almost half a century. Had they known that for the previous four months the bomb they heard, and fourteen others that made it safely back to American soil, had been stored under guard in the Labrador bush near Goose Air Base,¹ they would have been even more startled.

But in 1950, knowledge that Goose Bay was home to what today are popularly called "weapons of mass destruction" was well guarded. It was one of the worst periods of the Cold War. In June, North Korean forces attacked southward, routing their adversaries and instilling a new sense of urgency in the development of plans for North American defence. There was even some concern that the war was in part a ruse, designed to draw Free World forces to the Far East while the Soviets struck westward into Europe. One American response was to prepare to deploy its nuclear arsenal to possible danger zones. Goose Air Base, which was to see the first deployment of nuclear weapons on Canadian soil, was one of them – though few knew at the time.

Near the mouth of the Churchill River in Labrador, Goose Bay had been chosen ten years earlier to be the site of a new military airbase to serve Allied needs in World War II. In spring 1940, Germany's military successes in Europe, culminating in the collapse of France and the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk, led in North America to a growing concern for the survival of Britain and the possibility of a victorious Nazi Germany controlling the eastern Atlantic. Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Ogdensburg Agreement in August 1940, which pledged joint Canadian-American defense of North America, implicitly including the British Crown Colony of Newfoundland. The next month, Britain, in exchange for desperately needed American warships, granted leases to the Americans for military bases in its Caribbean colonies as well as in Newfoundland: at Gander, Stephenville (Harmon Field), and Argentia. With the war effort growing, however, bottlenecks at Gander soon led to American pressure for



Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In August 1940, the two leaders signed the Ogdensburg Agreement, which created a joint board to oversee the defence of North America, implicitly including the British Crown Colony of Newfoundland. Though some Canadians accused King of placing Canadian defence in the control of the United States, the prime minister, in the war's darkest hours, felt that military cooperation with the U.S. was essential and unavoidable.

another North American air terminal. Goose Bay, leased from Newfoundland by Canada, was the result. At the end of 1942, there were five thousand American, Canadian, and British military and over three thousand construction workers on the base at Goose Bay. At its height, it was one of the busiest airports in the world. An estimated 24,000 aircraft, all bound for the United Kingdom, passed through the airport, and some quarter-million American troops returned through it at war's end.

Postwar, Goose Bay should have declined into irrelevance. But the Soviet Union, the West's ally in World War II, had quickly become its new enemy, and Goose Bay, being closer to Soviet targets for long-range nuclear bombers than any location in the continental United States, retained its strategic position. The continued stationing of U.S. forces at Goose Bay was one of the topics of the first meeting between Mackenzie King and President Harry Truman in October 1946. In 1947, Canada, still leasing Goose Bay from Newfoundland, established an RCAF training centre and opened a passenger terminal for civil aviation. The Berlin Blockade of 1948² underlined the usefulness of Goose Bay as a supply route to Europe, while the explosion of a Soviet atom bomb the following year fed North American fears that



¹Names for the facility vary according to nationality and time period. The Americans, who occupied the southern portion of the site from 1942 to 1966, called it Goose Air Base. For Canadians in this period, it was RCAF Station Goose Bay. After 1966 it was designated CFB Goose Bay. Today it is officially Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

²In June 1948, the Soviet Union blocked access to the three Western-held sectors of Berlin, which were deep within the Soviet zone of Germany, by cutting off all rail and road routes going through Soviet-controlled territory in Germany. The U.S. responded by airlifting supplies to Berlin during the nearly yearlong blockade. It was the first serious crisis of the Cold War.



the Soviets were developing the capability to launch an airborne atomic attack with little or no warning. (The international complexities of maintaining a two-nation military base at Goose Bay lessened somewhat with the admission of Newfoundland as Canada's tenth province in 1949.) When the Korean War broke out, the American Strategic Air Command (SAC), created in 1946 to coordinate strategic, long-range air combat, including

nuclear bombers, approached Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent for permission to deploy eleven "special weapons"—the current American euphemism for atomic bombs—to Goose Bay for an experimental six-week period (which later turned into twelve). Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson was also privy to the discussions. Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton raised in Cabinet the issue of SAC aircraft being deployed to Goose Bay, but made no mention of their special cargo. His recommendation was approved with little discussion.

Ten years later, a furor would break out over the issue of permitting nuclear weapons on Canadian soil. In 1957, the new Conservative government of John Diefenbaker had agreed to deploy in Canada American Bomarc-B missiles, which flowed from the creation that year between Canada and the U.S. of the North American Air Defence Agreement (NORAD) to combine and coordinate continental defensive efforts. The government, however, sensing a growing anti-nuclear sentiment in Canada, waffled on the issue of arming

the Bomarc with nuclear payloads, eventually claiming that negotiations were ongoing with the United States to arm the missiles in the event of a crisis. In 1963 the American government, exasperated by Diefenbaker's indecision, coldly repudiated his claims and created an uproar in Canada that precipitated the fall of his minority government and its replacement by a Liberal government under Lester Pearson that vowed to honour earlier commitments.

But in 1950, political leaders were already sensitive to the issue, and it is not surprising that the St. Laurent government handled the Goose Bay deployment with the utmost caution and secrecy. That the deployment happened at all is testament to the fear that the Cold War had engendered in North American leaders. Several years later, in reviewing a discussion with American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on the use of tactical atomic weapons by NATO in Europe, Lester Pearson wrote of Dulles's concern "that any such arrangements should be kept very secret." Pearson agreed because he felt "it was practically impossible to reconcile constitutional positions with practical necessities of this kind." Perhaps St. Laurent and Pearson felt that, given the sensitivity of the issue, and the perceived Soviet threat, Canadians simply did not need to know. It had been, after all, only four years earlier that defecting Soviet intelligence officer Igor Gouzenko had tipped Canadian authorities to the presence of Soviet spy networks in Canada. However paternalistic St. Laurent and Pearson's actions may appear now, in the atmosphere of the Cold War, where nuclear war seemed imminent, their positive and speedy response to the American request was prudent.

In late August 1950, three SAC B-50 squadrons of forty-three aircraft, with eleven "special weapons" assemblies, arrived at Goose Bay. At the time America's nuclear arsenal was under the jurisdiction of the Atomic Energy Commission and the weapons themselves were stored at three national stockpile sites. The plutonium cores for these weapons remained at the AEC sites, but could be deployed to forward bases, such as Goose Bay, within hours. American atomic weapons protocol required that nuclear weapons be removed from aircraft for local storage. Because Goose Air Base had but rudimentary facilities left over from the war, the bombs were stored about six kilometres off base in the Labrador bush where they were protected by an around-the-clock armed guard. At the height of this deployment over four thousand officers and men were stationed at "the Goose," living mostly in tents. In November the weapons were returned to their national stockpile storage site at the Atomic Energy Commission's Killeen Base in Texas. It was during this last transfer that a B-50 developed mechanical problems and dumped its weapon load in the St. Lawrence.

Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson (left) with Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton, September 1950. They were among the few close to Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent who knew the nature of the cargo the Americans were deploying to Goose Bay.



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The number and type of nuclear weapons stored at Goose Air Base over the years is not known; diplomatic protocols for the stationing, storage, and deployment of "defensive" nuclear weapons were not completed until 1965. Only for a sixteen-month period in 1965 and 1966 did both Canadian and American governments acknowledge that defensive nuclear weapons were stored on the base. However, the very use of Goose Bay by Strategic Air Command bombers, tankers, and interceptors implies that such defensive munitions and SAC strategic "special weapons" were present and stored in the secure munitions bunkers at Goose Bay Air Base on temporary deployments long before 1965.

In those postwar years, Goose Bay became a major component of the SAC defence network as Soviet-American hostility escalated. In 1953 the Soviet Union exploded a thermonuclear weapon, the hydrogen bomb, adding yet more urgency to North American defence plans. The United States, which had concluded a new lease agreement with Canada in 1952 for 2,800 hectares at Goose Bay, began an extensive infrastructure program on the site, building sixty-two structures in the first year, including barracks, mess, hangars, administration buildings, and bunkers for the anticipated "special weapons" that Goose Air Base was designed to hold. Over the next five years, as it was completed, Strategic Air Command KC-97 Stratotanker refueling aircraft were stationed at Goose Air Base to service the developing fleet of SAC medium and heavy nuclear bombers. The latter included the B-36 Peacemaker heavy bomber and the B-47 Stratojet supersonic medium bomber. These aircraft were, with the aid of in-flight refueling by KC-97 Stratotankers at forward bases such as Goose, capable of striking a devastating blow at the industrial and demographic heart of the Soviet Union. Coupled with the presence of aerial tankers at Goose Air Base were the jet interceptor aircraft of the Fifty-Ninth Fighter Interceptor Squadron deployed to protect the base and its facilities from attacks by Soviet long-range bombers. By 1955 American plans for Goose Air Base consisted of the deployment there, on ninety-day rotations, of tankers, heavy bombers, and jet interceptors

that were equipped with nuclear air-to-air missiles. In the event of a nuclear war, SAC plans called for American interceptors to protect Goose Bay against a Soviet nuclear bomber attack while American bombers headed north from their continental bases to attack Soviet targets, refueling along the way at bases such as Goose and those in Greenland.

With the launch of their Sputnik satellite in 1957, the Soviet Union revealed its emerging capacity to direct nuclear-laden intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) against North American military and industrial targets. By the late 1950s, American defence plans were evolving to rely less upon manned jet interceptors to destroy attacking Soviet bombers, and more upon the doctrine of massive retaliation against a full-scale missile attack. Goose Air Base became a key component in a NATO network of bases and radar sites, serving both as a refueling and jet interceptor base for a retaliatory nuclear strike, and as the site of one of the links in the Pine-tree radar early warning system that stretched across Canada to aid surveillance of the North American airspace.

Goose Air Base lease ended in 1966, a reflection of changing defensive patterns and needs. Manned bombers were no longer the main threat from the Soviets nor were they the main weapon in the West. Redesignated CFB Goose Bay, the facility has since been used by NATO forces for low-level flight training. Some former Goose Air Base buildings are now used for commercial storage or leased to local businesses. And the former nuclear weapons bunkers? Today they're used for storage. ☐

Robert J. Burns is a Sparta, Ontario, historian and writer. He is the coauthor of *Guardians of the Wild*, a history of the warden service of Canada's national parks, published in 2000 by University of Calgary Press.

ET CETERA

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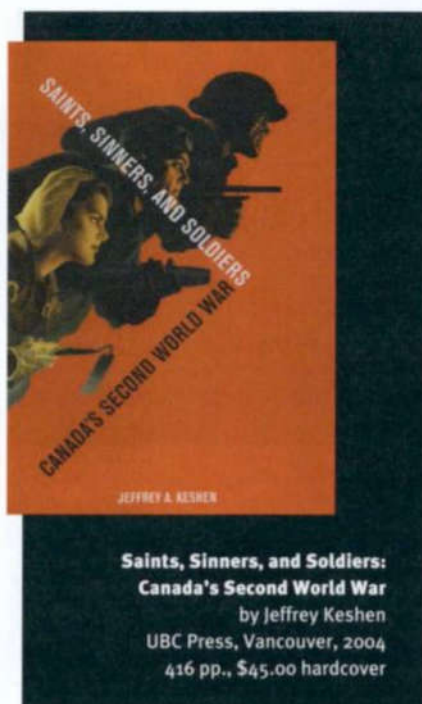
A Friendly Invasion: The American Military in Newfoundland, 1940-1990 by John N. Cardoulis. Breakwater, St. John's, Newfoundland, 1990.

I don't know Jeffrey Keshen, but we are enemies now, because he has written the book that I wanted to. *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers* is the first

comprehensive social history of Canada in the Second World War, and it is a very good one, a fact that only compounds my growing resentment of its author.

This is a scholarly work packing seventy pages of endnotes, but this should not dissuade anyone from reading it. Good history is more than a good read: it is expressly revisionist, a confrontation between the reader's views of history and the historian's. Keshen finds that the received version of home-front unanimity and consensus (which is to say, unanimity and consensus in English Canada), of selflessness and sacrifice in the face of adversity, is just half the story. Canada's war was also the story of black marketeering and rent gouging, of sexual immorality and juvenile delinquency, and of profiteering and labour disruption.

The book focuses on the home front while by no means neglecting events overseas. All the usual suspects are here: the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, women in factories and in uniform, organized labour and the Department of Munitions and Supply, but Keshen rounds them up in altogether new ways. His sources, which include seventy-five interviews he conducted, are original, and his conclusions are often surprising. Consider the chapters examining the impact of the war on families and on matters of public morality. As the armed forces grew by leaps and bounds (from fewer than 10,000 regulars in 1939 to more than 600,000 in 1944), so too did strain upon marriages and families. Divorce rates nearly doubled between 1936 and 1943, and plainly more was on the minds of the boys overseas than making the world safe for democracy. While the overall rate of venereal disease in the armed forces declined throughout the war, in some units more



men were struck down by venereal disease than by Germans. The VD rate among Canadians in Rome was 217 cases per 1,000; in the occupying forces in Germany it was 348. Moreover, I am compelled to remark that Keshen's description of how suspected cases of VD were treated by "Early Prevention Stations" fills a much-needed gap in my historical knowledge.

Few Canadians born since the war can evade the feelings of guilt that attend Remembrance Day ceremonies, when we are required to reflect upon how materialistic and self-absorbed our generation is in comparison to one that sacrificed everything so that we could be. I therefore found it comforting to discover that our own "greatest generation" consisted of mammals after all. I shall not belabour this point. This is a grittier view of Canada's war effort, but it is not consciously iconoclastic. Whenever it seems that he is about to draw real blood, Keshen chooses to soften the blow by assuring us that most Canadians possessed the fullest devotion to the cause. No doubt that this is true, but like so many of our historians, Keshen has an ingratiating way of casting wartime Canada as the geopolitical equivalent of the Little

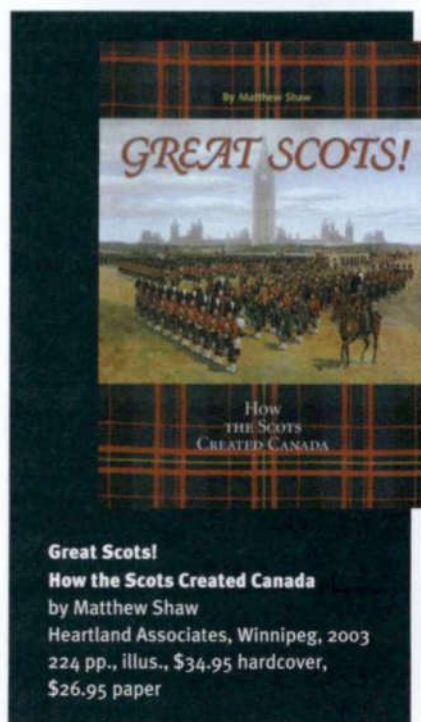
Engine that Could. American and British (and for that matter Australian and New Zealander) historians do not feel a comparable need, and I long for the day when Canadians' patriotic sensibilities will not be so delicate as to find forthright appraisals unendurable.

But how we needed this book. Now we need others like it, to explore regional variations and discover the ways in which Canadians of different genders, classes, and ethnicities experienced the war. In time a new synthesis will emerge, but Jeffrey Keshen will long be remembered as the author of the pioneering work.

Reviewed by **Graham Broad**, lecturer at Kings University College and Brescia University College in London, Ontario. He is writing a history of Canadian consumers in the Second World War.

SCOTLAND'S CHILD

It often struck me when I worked in the Canadian ship-building industry about twenty years ago that an extraordinarily large number of Scots held



Great Scots!
How the Scots Created Canada
by Matthew Shaw
Heartland Associates, Winnipeg, 2003
224 pp., illus., \$34.95 hardcover,
\$26.95 paper

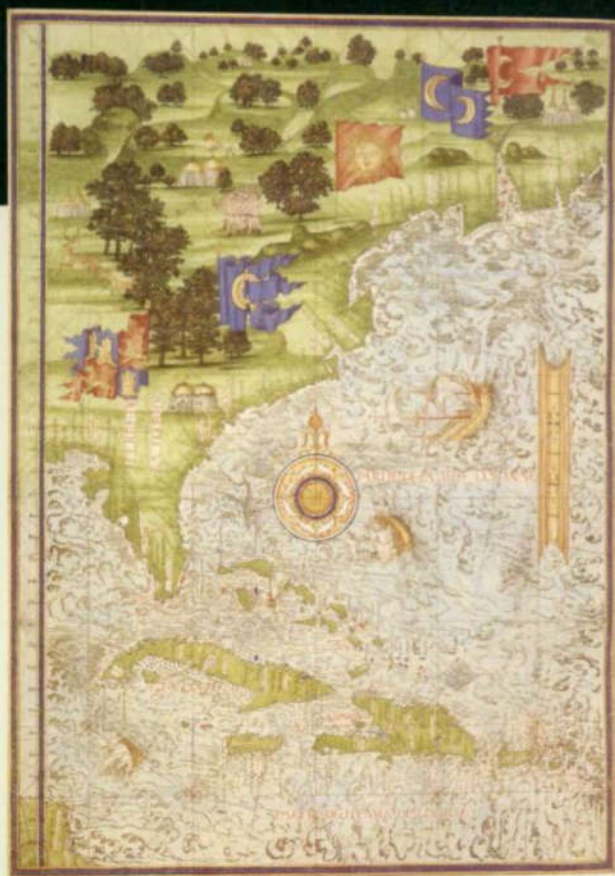
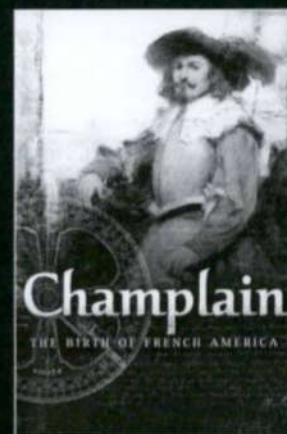
Champlain

The Birth of French America

Edited by Raymonde Litalien and Denis Vaugeois

This book is the definitive reference on Champlain and the birth of French America. It discusses not only the beginnings of L'Acadie, its development, and the difficulties of colonization but also looks at France during Champlain's time and analyses how he has been remembered. Lavishly illustrated, *Champlain* brings together the thirty-two maps attributed to him, reproduced for the first time in colour, as well as illustrations of numerous rare artifacts, documents, and a selection of drawings by Champlain.

A tenacious, multitalented individual, Samuel de Champlain was a cartographer, an explorer, and, ultimately, governor of the French colonies in the new world. His extensive writings, largely relating to his voyages, include the only known accounts of the Laurentian colony during the first quarter of the seventeenth century.



October 2004
Hardcover
9 1/2 x 13 412pp
Colour illustrations
\$89.00
ISBN 0-7735-2850-4



A lavishly illustrated book on the life and adventures of the father of New France.

Raymonde Litalien is an historian of New France and the author of *Les Explorateurs de l'Amérique du Nord, 1492-1795*.

Denis Vaugeois is an essayist, publisher, and historian whose area of expertise is New France.

senior management positions at shipyards across Canada. After reading Matthew Shaw's *Great Scots!*, I now know why.

Shaw, a British Columbia teacher and writer, chronicles the tremendous contribution Scots have made in shaping Canada. From the days of the fur trade to the late twentieth century, Scots have played a prominent role in Canadian industry, politics, literature, education, and the military. Captains of industry with Scottish roots had a paramount part in building the nation's banks, the CPR, the Hudson's Bay Company, universities, and shipping lines. Early political reformers such as Lord Elgin, the overwhelming majority of the Fathers of Confederation, and Canada's first two prime ministers were Scots. A quarter of all MPs who served before the Second World War had Scottish connections. To honour Scotland's links to Canadian military heritage, fully one-third of all current army regiments have Scottish names. In short, the Scots had their hands in forming many of Canada's fundamental institutions.

As well as providing the basic history behind the Scottish influence in Canada, Shaw also examines the reasons for this phenomenon. He suggests that a promising future in Scotland appeared remote for many under English domination and that Scottish immigrants, particularly those from the northern isles and highlands, were not deterred by Canada's harsh environment. As well, the Scots' strong work ethic, discipline, sense of adventure, thrift, shrewdness, organizational skills, and business insight made them especially well suited for the challenges and opportunities offered by the new frontier.

Great Scots! contains an impressive amount of detail, given its size, with each chapter devoted to one aspect of Scottish nation-building. The highly readable and breezy text is complemented by excellent photographs and illustrations from a variety of sources. *Great Scots!* offers no major findings in historical research, nor is it intended to. Rather, the author's primary objectives are to present a general survey of

the role played by Scots in building Canada and to highlight their extraordinary success within a work written for popular reading.

On the downside, *Great Scots!* would have benefited from closer editing or simple fact-checking as it contains some unfortunate repetition and sloppy typographical errors. Guy Carleton, not Shaw's Guy Carlton, was the enlightened Quebec governor following the 1759 defeat of the French on the Plains of Abraham, and the well-known figures of Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier also deserve to have their names spelled correctly. Nor can the claim to have led the Upper Canada rebellion in 1837 be made for William Lyon Mackenzie King, who had yet to be born. This distinction belongs to his grandfather, William Lyon Mackenzie. Other details will also give the reader pause. Surely the author knows that the First World War ended in November 1918, not November 1919. The bold statement that the Franklin expedition resorted to cannibalism in its unsuccessful search for the Northwest Passage during the 1840s is also questionable. More generally, the work

offers no endnote references, although it includes a good bibliography.

But these criticisms almost border on the trivial. Overall, Shaw eloquently shows that the Scottish influence in Canada is much more than simply bagpipes and curling. In this engaging presentation, he acknowledges that Canada owes much to the Scots and, indeed, that the essential fabric of Canadian society is the result of Scottish ingenuity and effort. While Shaw laments that most Canadians are unaware of this contribution, *Great Scots!* ably offers a remedy for this ignorance by giving the Scots their rightful due.

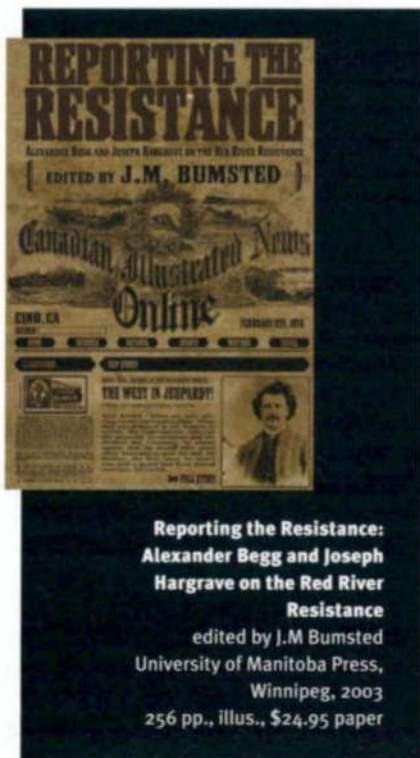
Reviewed by **Gavin Murphy**, an Ottawa lawyer and frequent contributor to the *Beaver*.

RED RIVER SHOCKHORROR

The Red River Resistance of 1869-70 was unquestionably the seminal event in the history of Western Canada. The events of those few months in the little isolated community

were like the hypothetical flutter of the butterfly's wing in fractal theory that results in large-scale changes down the road. They have been studied and re-studied by popular and academic historians, by generations of students, and will certainly continue to be at the centre of future efforts to understand the region's experience. The appearance in accessible form of documents bearing on the Resistance is therefore welcome.

The letters written to the *Toronto Globe* and the *Montreal Herald* by two young residents of the settlement are well worth publishing. They contain a good deal of material of interest to scholars and lively enough to hold the attention of the general reader. The editor's decision to print the letters in chronological order, rather than grouping them by author, was a good one. The introduction does a fine job of placing the letters in their context and



is perhaps the most concise and balanced review of the historiography of Red River that I have seen.

There are some relatively minor flaws in the volume. The editor has worked from microfilm copies of the two newspapers, which are occasionally illegible, and claims in the preface that "it has proved impossible to consult original versions to check transcriptions." I know that librarians are rightly protective of fragile documents, but surely one of the copies of the newspapers in question could have been made available for the day's work it would have required to fill the few gaps. The explanatory footnotes and editor's notes that accompany most of the letters are generally useful, but sometimes appear to get away on the editor. The 1868 famine, for example, is explained in five separate notes when one would have sufficed. The book promises in two places that "Full bibliographic data is posted on the Web site of the University of Manitoba Press, at

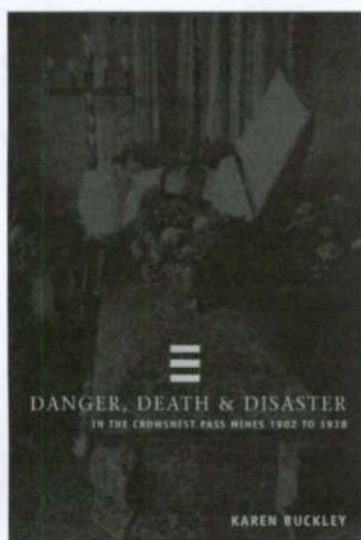
<www.umanitoba.ca/uofmpress>." At the time of writing this review in late August 2004 it was not to be found. [The Web posting is scheduled for December 2004. Ed.]

The decision to put some of the content that would normally be in a book on the web raises the question of whether or not it would make sense to publish most documents electronically. This is coincidentally the 100th anniversary of the project begun by the Public Archives of Canada to edit, annotate, and publish *Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada*, the first scholarly edition of its kind in Canada. The ensuing century has produced a rich tradition of documentary publication with series like those of the Champlain Society and the Hudson's Bay Record Society, several of the best of which, like W.L. Morton's edition of *Alexander Begg's Red River Journal*, deal with the history of Western Canada. But it might be time for a change.

Quantities of historical documents are becoming available on the web, of course, but are "published" in this form without any of scholarly apparatus that books like *Reporting the Resistance* provide. If documents were published electronically in something like the traditional paper form, minor errors in transcription could be easily corrected and introductions revised from time to time to reflect recent scholarship. This would require universities to make some adjustments to their promotion practices. It would also mean finding ways to evaluate and finance such projects. Arguably at least a portion of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funding would be better spent in this way than in underwriting the traditional book.

Reviewed by **Rod Macleod**, a professor in the department of history and classics at the University of Alberta and author of *From Rupert's Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John E. Foster* (University of Alberta Press, 2001).

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Danger, Death & Disaster in the Crowsnest Pass Mines, 1902-28

by Karen Buckley

ISBN 1-55238-132-3

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Danger, Death & Disaster in the Crowsnest Pass Mines, 1902-28

The Crowsnest Pass is famous for the tragic rock slide at Frank in 1903, but almost as famous are the many coal-mining tragedies that afflicted the region in the early twentieth century. With the discovery of a rich coal deposit in the region, the area underwent an economic boom and a spike in population that is still evidenced today. Unfortunately, with this type of mining, in rugged and often dangerous conditions, comes the threat of disaster and occasionally death.

This book examines carefully the various calamities that have afflicted the area and considers the impact on the inhabitants and victims of these numerous tragedies. Using original source material such as grave markers, folk songs and oral histories, the author portrays vividly the psychological and sociological features of both the individual and collective responses to death and danger, giving the reader a unique picture of mining communities that is as true today as it was a century ago.

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Once Upon a Time in Paradise: Canadians in the Golden Age of Hollywood. By Charles Foster.

This book by former Hollywood publicist (and, later, Canadian journalist) Foster presents fourteen mini-biographies of such celebrities as Jack Warner, Ruby Keeler, Yvonne de Carlo, and Walter Pidgeon. Dreams of Hollywood seduced many Canadians, and those who realized them and left their past behind are profiled here. Through interviews and conversations with stars and their associates, Foster reveals the egos, power struggles, and whims of fortune that defined the movie world from the 20s through the 40s.

Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2003. 319 pp., \$35.00 hardcover

Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960. By Richard Harris.

Social history and geography come together in this chronicle of the rise of Canadian suburbs. The author, a McMaster geography professor, presents a thoughtful analysis of the widespread, yet frequently reviled place so many Canadians call home, tracing the birth of the suburbs from diverse neighbourhoods that offered cheap land at the end of streetcar routes, to the homogeneity of postwar developments. Populated by middle-class consumers, these districts gave rise to a distinctive value system and way of life that would come to define the social norm. An important work that illuminates how where we live defines how we live.

University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2004. 204 pp., illus., \$19.95 paper; \$45.00 hardcover

Red Diaper Baby: A Boyhood in the Age of McCarthyism. By James Laxer.

While many parents in the 1950s were emulating Ward and June Cleaver or Jim and Margaret Anderson, James Laxer's parents were more like Julius and Ethel Rosenberg (without meeting the unhappy end). For Laxer, who grew up to found the Waffle faction of the NDP and run second for the leadership of that party in 1971, the 1950s were an amalgam of the quotidian (playing street

hockey) and the queer (delivering Communist Party flyers door to door) in ways most children's weren't. His parents were dedicated members of the Communist Party of Canada and in the repression of the postwar period obliged to live a life of evasions and vigilance and anxiety that seemed normal within tight family and Party settings, but increasingly strange to a child growing in awareness. At turns humorous and poignant, *Red Diaper Baby* is both an engaging distillation of what seems now like a long-ago era and a compassionate portrait of parents – and a generation of likeminded people – who, in believing in something greater than themselves, believed too often what they were told.

Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver and Toronto, 2004. 184 pp., \$29.95 hardcover

The Museum Called Canada: 25 Rooms of Wonder. By Charlotte Gray.

Have coffee tables shrunk? They may have, if *The Museum Called Canada* is any indication. An omnium-gatherum of all that's archival, it has the markings of a coffee table book – more art, less text – except for

its dimensions: At a bricklike twenty-three by seventeen by five centimeters, this is a book that can rest on the bedside table without threat to lamp, clock, and phone. Which may be why this is a Christmas gift book likely to be opened more than once. Its creators have trawled the treasures of Canada's museums to create what in effect is a kind of virtual museum of the country's history, organizing the images chronologically, from Albertosaurus to Canadarm, into twenty-five "rooms," each complete with text and commentary by one of Canada's finest social historians, Charlotte Gray. There are the things you might expect – Benjamin West's *The Death of Wolfe*, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but there are many more little seen and often quirky – Staffordshire figures of Sir John and Lady Franklin, Tom Thomson's shaving mug, a poster for the Guess Who's anti-Vietnam War hit *American Woman* – that would take a lot of shoe leather to find and view on your own. At 1.72 kilograms, *Museum* is worth its weight alone.

Random House Canada, Toronto, 2004. 705 pp., \$65.00 hardcover

Coming in February | March

The Beaver

A Whaler and a Gentleman

The very frank Arctic observations of George Healy.

BY DARLENE POLACHIC

Strange Fruit

Alabama Klansmen lynch a white Canadian Methodist missionary.

BY PETER MEYLER

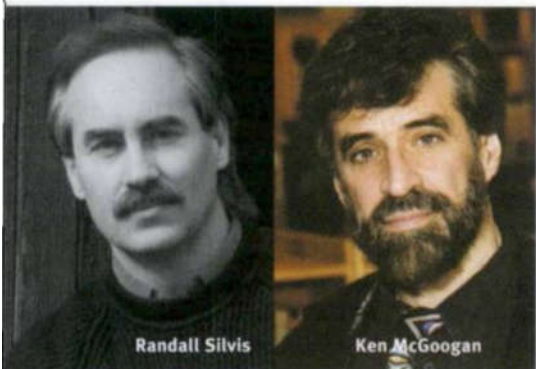
Tartan and Pure Laine

The surprising past of James Murray, first British governor of Quebec.

BY LOUISA BLAIR



Making It Up: The Fictions of Biography



An American writer, Randall Silvis, has a lively adventure tale out this fall on a Canadian subject: *Heart So Hungry*, the "extraordinary expedition" of Mina Hubbard through the interior of Labrador a hundred years ago.

It's a great story, no less so for having been told before. When outdoor journalist Leonidas Hubbard decided in 1903 to make his name with an expedition across Labrador, and then starved to death halfway through, his Canadian wife Mina, from Bewdley, Ontario, flung off the domesticity of the Victorian lady's parlour and proceeded to live out her husband's dream herself. She walked and canoed across the rugged interior of Labrador, beating out the rival expedition of her late husband's close companion, whom she hated for surviving when her beloved Laddie had died.

Biographer Randall Silvis was not satisfied with the Hubbard diaries and other sources. What put the hunger in Mina Hubbard's heart? he asked him-

self, and he decided the answers had to come from his own imagination. So from the novelist's all-knowing position, Silvis quotes Mina Hubbard's conversations, describes all she sees, feels her fears. *Heart So Hungry*, he explains in the preface, is a hybrid of fact and fiction.

As the play between nonfiction and fiction grows more intense, more and more biographers are exploring how a little fiction might enrich their narratives. Edmund Morris's *Dutch*, which has a "real" Ronald Reagan but a fictional narrator, is an odd and exhilarating study, particularly since it comes from Reagan's official biographer. A few years ago Susan Crean's acclaimed *The Laughing One* evoked Emily Carr in tripart movements, with chapters that including an imagined scene, a biographical section, and a memoir of the author's pursuit of her subject.

I recently enjoyed an e-mail exchange with writer Ken McGoogan, who has been living with these issues in *Fatal Passage* and *Ancient Mariner*, his lives of Arctic explorers John Rae and Samuel Hearne. McGoogan works hard on his scene setting, and when the record is sparse, he likes to work up some dialogue and project emotions into historical characters. "I acknowledge, often explicitly, always implicitly, that the historical record is riddled with holes and contradictions," he told me recently. "And I tell the reader: having digested the material, I offer my best guess as to how events unfolded."

McGoogan's techniques have attracted criticism—some in this magazine—but readers seem to have

responded well. I picked up *Fatal Passage* some years ago, suspecting there was little I wanted to know about yet another dauntless white male confronting the Arctic wastes—and found it engrossing and thoughtful.

McGoogan acknowledges the difficulty of borrowing from fiction. "This is risky business. You can go too far, cross over into pure fiction and lose credibility. Fictional techniques also require superior craftsmanship; applied poorly, they draw unwanted attention, get in the way and undermine the work."

What pulls writers this way? Something "less ponderous, more vivid—and more fun?" Partly, it's a revolt against "the textbook," the symbol of unimaginative factual recitations devoid of character.

It's a revolt against false certainty too, McGoogan says. "I think that because we live in a global village, and so must constantly process so many divergent perspectives, we're developing a more complex awareness—a post-modern consciousness. This consciousness recognizes and understands truth, and certainly written truth, as at best provisional and approximate. When I write narrative nonfiction, I speak to that emerging consciousness."

I'm with McGoogan on the uncertainty of the past. A bag full of facts is rarely the attraction of a biography. Rather it's the argument about the past, the tantalizing mystery of some past life's endless foreignness.

But fiction, it seems to me, is naturally bad at this. A fiction writer's art is to make a scene feel true. If it feels true, the reader suspends disbelief: there are no uncertainties. Nonfiction never expects us to suspend disbelief. Nonfiction is less the past itself than a meditation or an argument about the past. It, not fiction, is the literature where meanings are naturally multiple and uncertain and debatable. Precisely what most often bores me about fiction is the easy certainty of it all.

The novelist Henry James elegantly expressed his doubts about fictionalizing the past about the time Leonidas Hubbard was planning his Labrador journey. The problem of most historical novels, James wrote in 1901, arises

from the near impossibility of inventing fictional individuals "in whose minds half the things that make ours, that make the modern world, were non-existent."

I can see how the dialogue and the vividly evoked emotions Randall Silvis has put into *Heart So Hungry* make Mina Hubbard readily accessible to a generation raised on paperback novels; it's a lively, dramatic read. But the question driving the story—why would anyone do that?—loses its power if the author has the answer down pat.

To my eye, the great imaginative feat of Ken McGoogan's biography of Samuel Hearne is expressed in its title image: Hearne as the Ancient Mariner. Hearne and Samuel Taylor Coleridge had friends in common; Coleridge read Hearne's memoirs. That's a thin base from which to prove Hearne inspired Coleridge's poem, but McGoogan has a larger point. The years when the Dene of the Barren Grounds took Hearne to the Arctic coast were less about exploration than culture shock. The experience overthrew everything European life had taught Hearne about human nature, and left him permanently estranged from the comfortable certainties most people rely on all their lives. (Hearne, you might say, experienced something of the shock most native peoples endured from European contact.) He never killed an albatross, but he carried the shock of that strangeness all his life. Suggesting that is not fictional imagination, finally; that's a biographer doing his job.

Reading these words in his comfortable loft office, McGoogan uncoiled his lanky frame and flung down the magazine. "Chris doesn't get it at all," he shouted at the silent walls. "That's nothing like what I was trying to do!"

Actually, I made up that last paragraph. ■

Heart So Hungry: The Extraordinary Expedition of Mina Hubbard into the Labrador Wilderness by Randall Silvis, was published by Knopf Canada in the fall of 2004, as was the paperback edition of *Ancient Mariner: The Amazing Adventures of Samuel Hearne, the Sailor Who Walked to the Arctic Ocean* by Ken McGoogan (Harper Collins Perennial).

Arctic explorer VILHJAMUR STEFANSSON courted controversy, but, argues Pierre Berton, he brought much needed attention to the North and to its people.

Vilhjamur Stefansson was, in the words of a colleague, "the last of the old-time explorers." His discoveries were made in the first two decades of the twentieth century, before the era of the airplane, the snowmobile, and the paved highway—and they were monumental. He identified some of the world's last known major land masses—Brock, Bor-

sometimes overstepped the mark, as his flawed theory about the so-called "White Eskimos" demonstrates. In 1906, on his first expedition, he encountered on Herschel Island (a tiny speck just north of the Yukon coast) a dubious rascal, Christian Klengenberg, who claimed to know of a mysterious race of natives who dressed and acted



Vilhjamur Stefansson
hauling a seal, circa 1915.

den, Meighen, and Lougheed Islands—thus claiming 250,000 square kilometres of new territory for Canada. He outlined the continental shelf from Alaska to Prince Patrick Island, and he revealed the presence of mountains and valleys beneath the frozen surface of the Beaufort Sea. He lived with the Inuit, thrived on their all-meat and all-fat diet, and trotted (not walked) for an estimated 32,000 kilometres behind a dog team.

For most of his life he was plunged into controversy, much of it centring around his overwhelming ambition. He wanted to be known as the greatest explorer in history and changed his name from William Stevenson to add a note of northern glamour to his reputation. But in his lust for acclaim, he

like Inuit but did not look like them. Some, indeed, appeared to have light hair and blue eyes. To an ambitious young anthropologist, that would be a discovery of a lifetime. Klengenberg's tale obsessed him after he returned to New York. Two years later he was back in the Arctic, subsidized by the American Museum of Natural History. But it was not until the spring of 1910 that he was able to head off, with two Inuit companions, for the great bulk of Victoria Island, where the mysterious race was said to exist.

There certainly were Inuit on the island—seal hunters who had never set eyes upon a white man and who had knives made of copper. These were Stone Age people—Copper Eskimos as they came to be called. "Their discov-

He came upon another brand of Inuit ... Their faces in some cases seemed paler, and one or two had brownish hair. The superoptimistic explorer could not conceal his enthusiasm. Were these the descendants of the lost expedition of Leif Eriksson, one thousand years before?

ery," Stefansson recalled later, "marks my introduction to men and women of a bygone age. Their existence was an anachronism representing a time lapse of ten thousand years."

That discovery alone would have elevated Stefansson into the ranks of the major explorers, but it was not enough for him. Klengenberg's tale had occupied his imagination for four years, and he had already half-persuaded himself that the mysterious race of "blond Eskimos" existed. Now he set off across Victoria Island to prove it.

Some days later he came upon another brand of Inuit who seemed to him to be similar to the ones Klengenberg had described. Their faces in some cases seemed paler, and one or two had brownish hair. The superoptimistic explorer could not conceal his enthusiasm. Were these the descendants of the lost expedition of Leif Eriksson, one thousand years before?

He could not keep his discovery to himself and blurted it out when at last he took passage to Seattle. A newspaperman, sensing a scoop, interviewed him on the dock and embellished the tale, describing his find of "a lost tribe of white descendants of Leif Eriksson ... ranking in importance to the discoveries of the lost tribes of Israel."

The story hit the front pages. *NEW RACE SOLVES MYSTERY OF THE AGES*, the *New York Times* heralded. Stefansson found himself at the centre of a full-

blown controversy. But there were demurrers. Roald Amundsen, the discoverer of the Northwest Passage and the South Pole, called the story "the most palpable nonsense that ever came from the north."

Stefansson, who felt the press had distorted the tale, still stood by it. The controversy dogged him for all his life. In his bestselling book *My Life With the Eskimos*, he devoted a chapter to it. His suppositions have since been discredited. It has long been recognized that not all Inuit are alike, that occasionally a blue-eyed native does turn up, and that skin and hair pigments come in different shades.

The controversy was still raging when Stefansson returned to the Arctic as leader of a Canadian government expedition of scientific and geographical discovery. In spite of its accomplishments, it, too, was marred by controversy. When his schooner *Karluk* became locked in the ice, Stefansson, concerned about a shortage of food, left the ship to go hunting. When he returned, it had vanished, borne away by the moving ice pack.

Stefansson was unfairly blamed in some quarters for "abandoning" his charges, but the real problem, from the Canadian point of view, was the cost of the expedition. Budgeted at \$75,000, the final bill was half a million. Though Ottawa tried to pry him out of the Arctic, the dogged explorer ignored his superiors and hung on for another year. He was never employed again.

Stefansson devoted his latter years to writing and lecturing. His book, *The Friendly Arctic*, promoted his theory that the frozen world was no more hostile than the Mediterranean—to rugged explorers, no doubt, but not to tourists or settlers. Again he found himself the centre of a new controversy. In boosting the Arctic he had once again overstated his case. But his greatest contribution was that he had managed to turn the eyes of the world onto the far north and on the sturdy and resourceful people who, until this time, had been shamefully neglected.

Pierre Berton's fiftieth book, *Prisoners of the North*, was published in September by Doubleday Canada.

Your Story

ARCTIC PASSAGE

July 8, 1954. I sat squirming on a metal folding chair squeezed into a viewing area with seven hundred others. We were celebrating the commissioning of

the HMCS *Labrador*, a \$20 million ice-breaker, and my imagination buzzed at full speed. This ship was taking my dad to the North Pole.

As it turned out, his adventures weren't quite what a five-year-old had in mind. His letters tell me that. They sit before me now, fifty years later, enclosed in faded envelopes all addressed to my mother and bound together with a rubber band. They chronicle the historic voyage of the HMCS *Labrador*, the first naval ship to complete the Northwest Passage and a circumnavigation of North America. They tell the story of a young naval officer enthralled with the majesty and adventure of the North.

The HMCS *Labrador* set out from Halifax on July 23, 1954, headed up the Davis Strait, along the coast of Greenland, and turned west into the Lancaster Sound. It was here that my dad, Lieutenant Bill Maxwell, an engineer, was introduced to the magnificence of the Far North. When the watch broadcast the signal, "All



Lieutenant A/E Bill Maxwell

Inuit passengers



hands to goofing stations," he raced to the deck with the other men to see Mother Nature's Arctic delights. *The North is fascinating. Truly fascinating... icebergs ... look like the bright tops of many buildings in an unbelievably clear and spotless city ... to see and marvel at the enormous colonies of walrus that populate the big, low, flat floating islands of ice. ... Bears galore come loping over the ice and come right up alongside us and are just as interested in us as we are in them. Dad was enamoured with the Arctic for the rest of his life.*

Scientific research was a critical function of the *Labrador's* first voyage. Ten civilian scientists were aboard. *We've spent days and days wandering about at sea doing all sorts of strange things. ... men busily engaged in weird and wonderful tasks. ... Oceanographers drop tricky pots, devices, nets and things on long lines down into the bottom of the sea and duly record their findings. ... Doc Rose ... sits among a line of blinking lights counting the number of ... neutrons, electrons and cosmic particles sticking to his counters. Geodists [sic] measure the field strength and direction of the earth's magnetic field. Right now we are just*

about on the North Magnetic Pole and the field is vertical, or so they say. Other men are studying the brain of a walrus. I looked at it and thought it resembled a good steak and what a waste it was!"

One of the ship's stops was in Alexandria Fiord on Ellesmere Island where the crew unloaded a year's supplies, including 72.5 tonnes of coal, for the two-person RCMP post there. *The detachment is beautifully equipped and they [RCMP] seem to be well fixed for everything except mail. Somehow it wasn't sent to us for delivery. It had been a year since these men had had any mail.*

In addition to supplies, the ship landed Special Constable Ariak, an Inuit, and his wife and four children. This family, their possessions, and their seventeen dogs had come aboard at Craig Harbour. My father wrote about his impressions: *"[They] adapted themselves beautifully. The children aged 6 years to 1 year are perfectly trained and their manners could not be improved upon. The Doc had them all in the sick bay for a check up. He had toys and puzzles for the children. One child would take a toy and look at it, play with it while the other waited[;] when he was finished it would be handed to the next and so on. Likewise with food. He passed one chocolate bar to one child, not the eldest. The child looked at it, smelled it, divided it equally. They all consumed, picked up the crumbs and scraps of paper from the desk and all was perfect harmony. Their close quarters must make for neat living*

and hard life for good self-discipline. His letters do not reflect why this family was moved to Alexandria Fiord, but years later he wondered if they had been part of a plan to establish Canadian sovereignty in sparsely populated areas of the North.

Throughout the voyage, Dad developed increasing respect for those early explorers who had searched for the elusive Northwest Passage. In mid-August he went ashore at Erebus Bay where Sir John Franklin and his party wintered on Beechey Island during their fatal trip of 1845–46: *The place was almost as he had left it. The buildings still there, bracked barrels intact, flagstaff still standing, bully beef tins, ships' fittings, coal pile all as it was left 110 years ago. He compared these historical remnants with those of a later explorer, Leopold M'Clintock, R.N., who sailed in Lady Franklin's steam yacht, the Fox (1857–59): On Dealy Island the state of preservation of M'Clintock's cache was even better. After 102 years the tinned meat was still edible, clothes wearable, shoes intact but not wearable, buildings and cairn just as it was in the beginning. If we were alone when ashore at these places I'm sure it would be nearly possible to hear these distant peoples' voices.*

A sense of adventure enveloped the ship's crew as they responded to a rescue call. The *Monte Carlo*, a twenty-four-metre Boston dragger, was in distress, stuck in heavy ice in the Barling Channel: *We've spent the last two*

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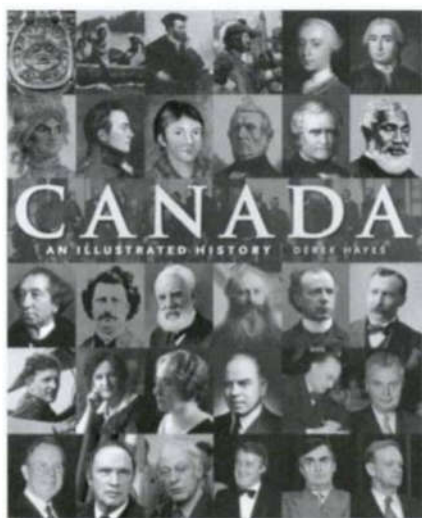
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days searching for a group of Americans up here in a small schooner. They are hemmed in by ice and would certainly be here for the winter. However, they are young Harvard students. Have a good sturdy little ship. And don't seem unduly perturbed by the whole affair. Maybe they should be through in good time for school.

By the end of August, the *Labrador* was working off Banks Island at the western end of Viscount Melville Sound when one of the crew became critically ill. The decision was taken to make the push to complete the Northwest Passage; the ship ploughed south through the Prince of Wales Strait and into the Beaufort Sea: *A south wind is blowing steadily keeping the polar pack 20 or 30 miles clear of the coast. We steam along through open stretches of water with nought but bergy bits and the washout from the Mackenzie River to impede our way. Later: We're off the Alaskan coast, Herschel Island to be exact, and actually West of Vancouver. The trip has been easy. In my novice mind there is nothing to it. It almost looks as if the day of the "explorer", in his wooden barque with meager rations and steely nerves is past. With modern equipment in good condition it should be relatively easy to make the "Passage". I think that that might be our best contribution to society for this trip.*

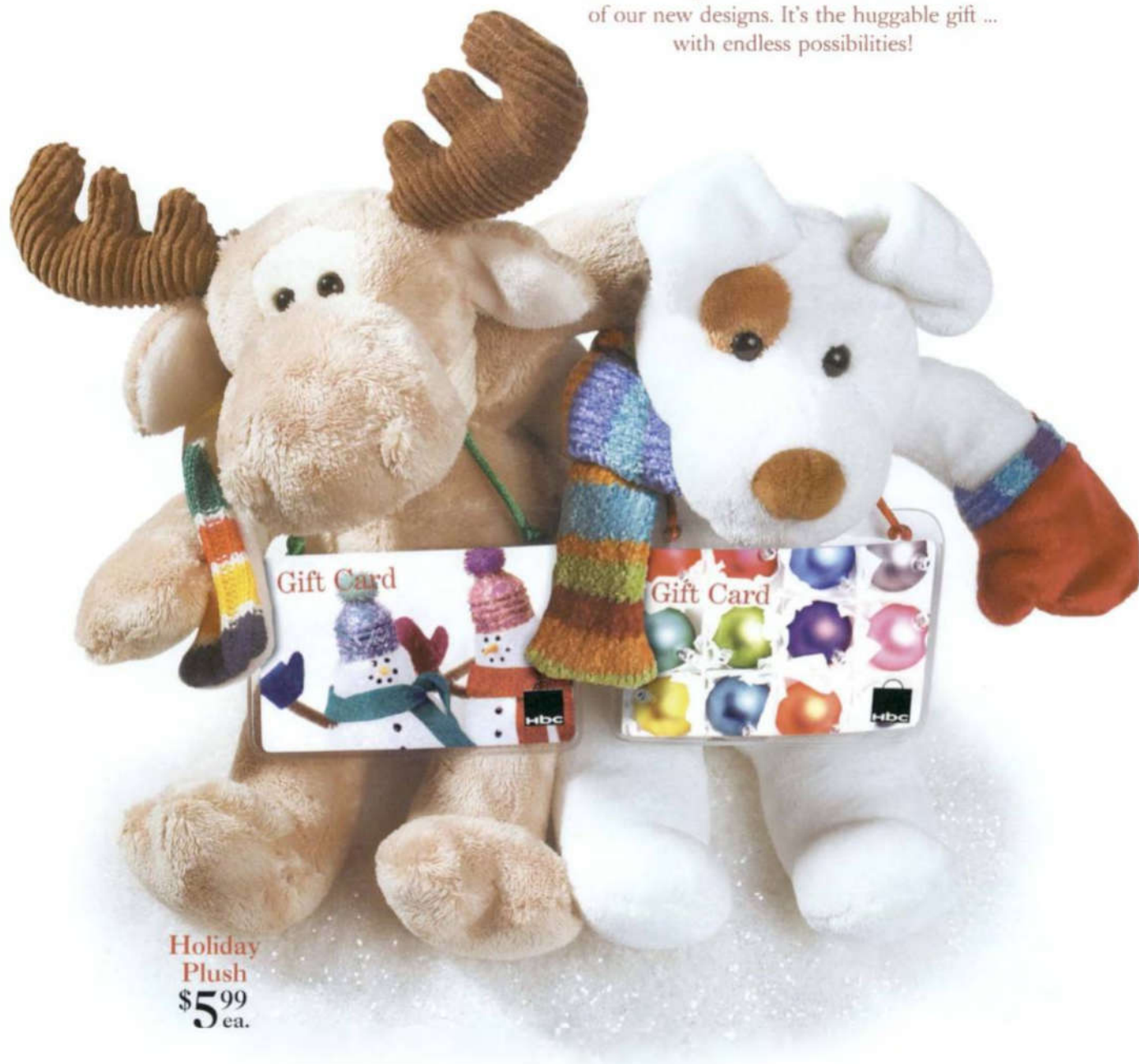
On September 27, 1954, the HMCS *Labrador* arrived in Esquimalt, where the sick sailor was transferred to hospital. Shortly thereafter, the crew set sail to complete the circumnavigation of North America via the Panama Canal. On November 21, the HMCS *Labrador* docked in Halifax. My dad was home from the North Pole—just in time for Christmas!

By Liz Maxwell, who lives with her family in Fenelon Falls, Ontario.

Have you had a personal experience with the great characters or momentous events of Canadian history? If you would like to submit a story for possible publication, send it to editors@historysociety.ca with YourStory in the subject line, or write to Your Story, c/o The Beaver, 478-167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. For further information please see our editorial guidelines at www.thebeaver.ca.

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Overlooking the County of Avalon site and the inner harbour.



High above sea level, Castle Hill provides a spectacular view of modern-day Placentia.

than one million artifacts have been discovered—and recreated structures, such as the reproduction seventeenth-century kitchen, featuring living interpretation.

Take a walk along the original cobble street and munch on an herb from one of three recreated heritage gardens. From the well-preserved structures uncovered at the site—including a tidal-flushed stone privy, smithy's forge, defensive ditch, and a stone seawall—you can imagine that this was a carefully planned colony. On less than two hectares, it became home to 125 settlers who also built tenements, a brewery, cookhouse, warehouse, and wharves. Avalon was also the first colony in British North America where religious freedom was practised. That ended when Sir David Kirke, a staunch Protestant, took control in 1637, renaming it the Pool Plantation. But while the London merchant turned the colony into a successful fishing enterprise, he was later called back to England and jailed for tax evasion.

Two gold rings, probably left after a French raid on the colony in 1696, are part of the burgeoning artifact display at the on-site conservation lab in the interpretation centre. Such raids were instigated from the original French capital of Newfoundland, now Placentia, the next stop in our weekend getaway.

While the famous soldier Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville led French troops on a direct overland route between the settlements, we suggest taking the highway. Approximately 130 kilometres southwest of St. John's lie the impressive stone ruins of Fort Royal on Castle

THE FIGHT FOR FISH

Alison Dyer explores English settlement and French garrison in Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula.

The story of settlement in Newfoundland has all the makings of a hot bestseller: charismatic figures, fiery events, struggle, duplicity, success. And while many cultures fill more than a page in Newfoundland's history, two in particular used its shores in a battle for supremacy.

In the seventeenth century, the English and French were engaged in a continual back and forth of pillage and plunder with the prize being control of the lucrative cod fishery. Two settlements that figured large in this conflict were the Colony of Avalon (now

Ferryland) and Plaisance (now Placentia).

A weekend getaway that includes both historic sites starts about a one-hour drive south of St. John's. Approaching Ferryland, you'll see the community wrapped around the inner harbour like a shawl. With the fog occasionally advancing and retreating the length of the harbour like some giant sea monster trapped in the intertidal zone, one can understand why, in 1621, Lord Baltimore named his first New World colony after that mysterious isle of Arthurian legend.

Today the site is an engaging mix of ongoing archeological digs—from which more

Dig site (below) at Ferryland.

Recreated seventeenth-century garden (right and far right) at the County of Avalon site.



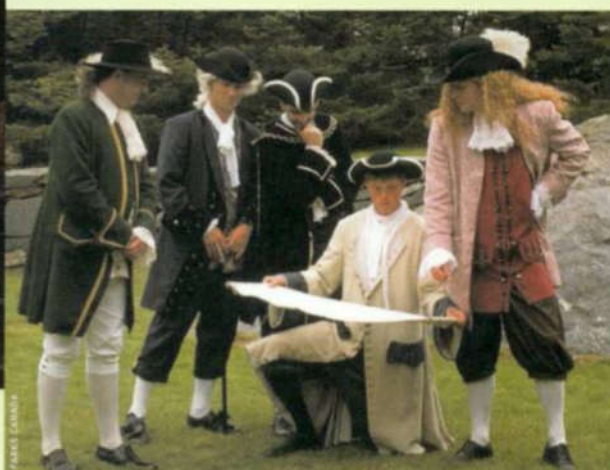
Hill, 240 metres above sea level and offering a spectacular view of Placentia, founded in the 1660s. The French built a series of fortifications at the site to protect their claim to the fishery. (Archeological crews are now at work uncovering still older forts within the town.) From them, they defended themselves and launched attacks on the English over an ensuing fifty-year period, hiring people like the corsair Jean Sviragacipi, a Basque sea captain licensed to practise piracy.

From the underground interpretation centre, pick up an audiotape to interpret the forty-five-minute outdoor tour of the fort, stone breastwork wall, and outlying batteries that cover the twenty-seven-hectare site. As impregnable as the site appears, the English finally won with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

About one-half-hour's drive away, at Ship Harbour, the signing of another agreement of great historical significance took place. In 1941, after a secret meeting on vessels anchored in



Interpreter (above) in a reproduction seventeenth-century kitchen at the County of Avalon site.



Reenactors (right) at Castle Hill NHS.

this harbour, U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill signed the Atlantic Charter, laying the principles for the founding charter of the United Nations in 1945. As if embodying the very

principles of that document, the simple commemorative monument lies in an extraordinarily beautiful and peaceful setting.

Alison Dyer is a freelance writer and broadcaster living in St. John's, Newfoundland.

IF YOU GO ...



THE COLONY OF AVALON, at Ferryland, is 80 kilometres south of St. John's on the Irish Loop or Route 10. Castle Hill NHS is about 130 kilometres southwest of St. John's. Take the Trans Canada Highway west to Whitbourne, then take Route 100. The site is located just before you reach Placentia. To reach the Atlantic Charter Monument, return northeast on route 100 and take Route 102 to Ship Harbour, about 20 kilometres from Castle Hill.

For information on places to see, accommodations, and special events contact:

Tourism Newfoundland & Labrador

P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1B 4J6
T: 1-800-563-6353
W: <http://www.gov.nl.ca/tourism>

Castle Hill National Historic Site

P.O. Box 10 Jersey side
Placentia Bay, Newfoundland
A0B 2G0
T: (709) 227-2401
E: castle.hill@pc.gc.ca
W: www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/castlehill/index_e.asp

Castle Hill National Historic Site grounds are open year-round. How-

ever, personal service and access to the visitor centre is available only from May 15 to October 15. Open hours during the visitor season are 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Colony of Avalon

P.O. Box 119
Ferryland, Newfoundland
A0A 2H0
T: 1-877-326-5669
E: info.colony@thezone.net
W: www.heritage.nf.ca/avalon

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AWARD WINNERS

Governor General honours teachers

This year's Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History, held at the Royal Ottawa Golf and Country Club, were an organizational challenge due to the federal public service strike action the week prior to the official ceremonies in Ottawa. Nonetheless, the History Society and its valued partners were committed to ensuring that this year's recipients—Dan Soberg, Francesca Ianni, Jean-Pierre and Christian Lagueux, Mark Melnyk, Adrienne Chong, and Georgina McMurchy-Barber—were celebrated with the same level of excellence that brought them this honour. The History Society is grateful to the teams at Rideau Hall and at Library and Archives Canada for their steadfast support of this program at every stage, as well as Bell Canada for its continued financial commitment to the awards.

Below are excerpts of the speech given by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson at the ceremonies held Friday, October 15, 2004. (For full text, visit our website: HistorySociety.ca)

I'm pleased to once again have the privilege of welcoming all of you to the Capital Region—I'm sorry that it was impossible for us to celebrate Canadian history at Rideau Hall, which is absolutely drenched in it. But, history is always untidy and notably reluctant to travel in straight lines, and this is part of why we love it. ...

I'm also very happy to be in the presence of great teachers. ... When we give the Order of Canada, our highest civilian honour, I always invite the recipients to reflect on those who stood behind them in their youth and childhood, and I ask you to do the same. I am sure that today's recipients can point to one or more teachers who had everything to do with the passion for history that you now pass on to your own students.

Without a sense of history, as individuals and as a society, we cannot act decently and responsibly in the present or proceed toward the future with confidence. History binds us to our ancestors with respect, and directs our thoughts toward those who will follow. As Edmund Burke once said, "History is a pact between the dead, the living and the yet unborn." An agreement like this is a vital thing, and we dismiss it at our own peril. It is nearly a cliché to argue

for the importance of history, yet our recipients see, at first hand, all the forces that can discourage their students from knowing and loving history.

History is a most wonderful subject to teach and to learn, but it is *fragile*. It is vulnerable to the multiple distractions of an affluent society like ours, and to the constant messages which insist that only what is "New and Improved!" is worth our attention. In *The Age of Extremes*, Eric Hobsbawm argues that public awareness of past public events is alarmingly small: "The destruction of the past, or rather of the social mechanisms that link one's contemporary experience to that of earlier generations, is one of the most characteristic and eerie phenomena of the late 20th century. Most young men and women at the century's end grow up in a sort of permanent present, lacking any organic relation to the public past of the times they live in. This makes historians whose business it is to remember what others forget, more essential now than ever." It goes without saying that this is also true for those who teach it.

The Canadian humorist and teacher, Stephen Leacock, once said this: "I never realized that there was history, close at hand, beside my very own home. I didn't realize that the old grave that stood among the brambles at the foot of our farm was *history*." Good teachers convince students that history is *real*. It is not a subject that can be neatly packaged in a huge and dusty book and put away. It is not, as many students come to dimly suspect, something that adults make up so that kids will have something to keep them busy during the day! ...

We have our fair share of national scandals and shames, and these have been mighty lessons to learn. We have learned them, and still are. We also can celebrate a past, though, that has astonishingly little domestic bloodshed, international contributions of great significance, and which has created the unique and, in many ways, exemplary society that we have today. People and institutions all over the world look at what



Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson (top, seated centre) with CNHS president and CEO Deborah Morrison (seated right) and CNHS board of directors chair Jim Arnett (seated left). Back, left to right: Governor General's Award winners Christian Lagueux, Dan Soberg, Jackie Underhill, Adrienne Chong, Mark Melnyk, Georgina McMurchy-Barber, Francesca Ianni, and Jean-Pierre Lagueux.

Bell Canada vice president—regulatory law David Kidd (bottom, left) congratulates winners Mark Melnyk and Adrienne Chong at the Ottawa awards ceremony.



Award winners and guests toured the collection of Library and Archives Canada.

Canada has accomplished—our high living standard, our diversity, our social order—and they want to know "How did you *do* that?" If for no other reason, we have to understand our history in order to be able to answer that rather flattering question. And, of course, to be able to continue the good work that has been done in the past.

I regret that history, for some time now, has been deemphasized or homogenized in our schools, but I am thrilled by the signals that an event like this gives: that history is receiving greater attention, that there are outstanding teachers of it in our schools. The Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History is more than an award to an individual teacher. It rewards that teacher's entire school, for one thing, but it also honours all those who have made the study and teaching of Canadian history a vocation. Such people are a precious national resource, one that helps us as Canadians to maintain our highest ideals. For of all the things most important for Canadians and for our nationhood, the study of history is the greatest.

As Governor General of Canada, I wish to thank you and to congratulate you for what you have achieved. Of course, the greatest reward for you is that your students will never forget you. You will have become part of their history.

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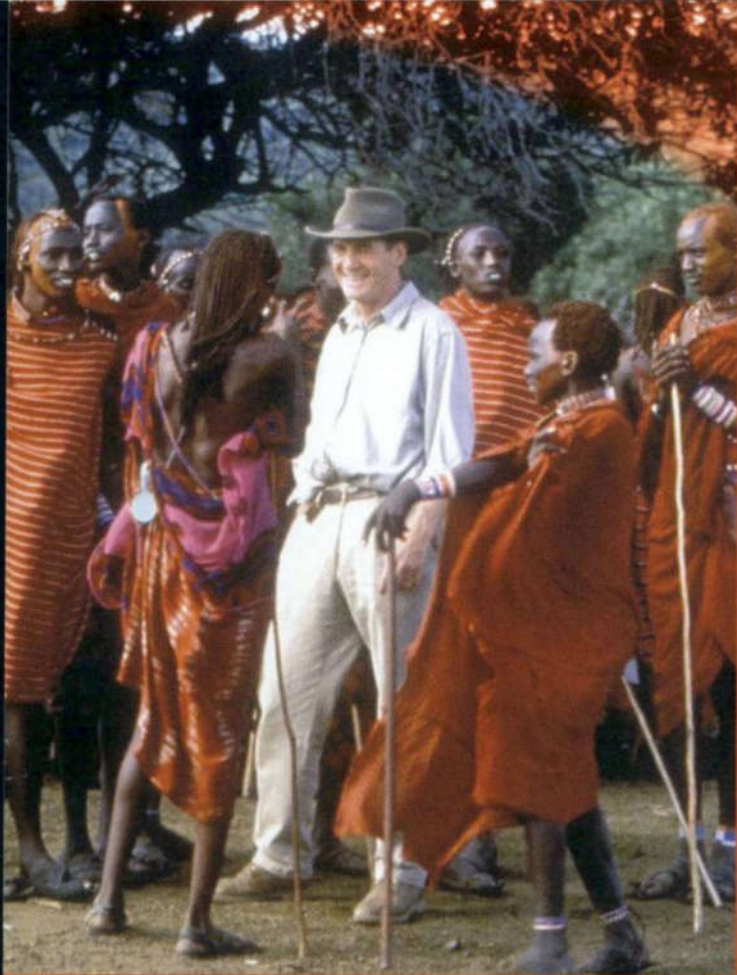


Cal White, who submitted this photograph to the *Beaver*, is the great-nephew of Annie and Maude Nelson. He lives in Grimshaw, Alberta.



Tableau "Love and best wishes to all at Maurice St.," Annie and Maude Nelson wrote on the back of this photo, sent to family, possibly in Mount Forest, Ontario, at Christmas 1894. They had chosen for the predilection of their family and friends a picture of themselves in a tableau given by their physical cultural class. Stage reputations may have been suspect in the nineteenth century, but respectable women like Annie and Maude could engage without shame in parlour theatricals or tableaux vivants, which combined physical activity with poetic feelings of unimpeachable virtue. The famous historical or literary event depicted invariably represented virtue too. In this case, Annie and Maude's class, likely at the University of Toronto where Annie was a student, chose the death of Virginia, the beautiful daughter of a plebeian soldier stabbed by her own father to save her from the lust of a corrupt Roman official. Annie stands arm raised; Maude kneels in profile; others mourn. The audience, presumably, was properly chastened. ■

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in our country's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied at your local photo shop (please don't send priceless originals) and send it to: Album, c/o *The Beaver*, #478-167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your copy returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



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